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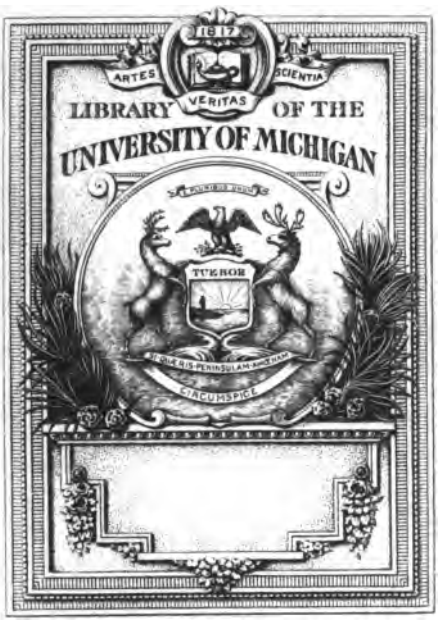

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MONTAIGNE
AND MEDICINE

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MONTAIGNE
AND MEDICINE

Being the Essayist's Comments on contemporary Physic and Physicians; his Thoughts on many material Matters relating to Life and Death; an Account of his bodily Ailments and Peculiarities and of his Travels in Search of Health

By

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PAUL B. HOEBER
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To
DR. HIRAM RITTENHOUSE LOUX
of Philadelphia
who ministers with consummate skill to forms
of suffering for which there was no relief
in MONTAIGNE'S *day*

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INTRODUCTION

NO MATTER how soon the adult reader is introduced to Montaigne he will always regret not having come earlier under the spell of this rare spirit. Of all the philosophers of the past not one makes as strong an appeal to the physician as Montaigne. He was for years a great sufferer from maladies which the profession could not alleviate and so we are, in a sense, his debtors. Like the true physician he held everything *sub judice*, unable to declare that the last word had been said, unwilling to speak with finality on the thousand and one things which he observed and studied. In analyzing human thought and conduct he was a model for the physician who studies pathology and symptoms, and many are the analogies between his situation, his mode of thought, his character and temperament and those of the profession.[1] He recorded truthfully the phenomena that

[1] Under the guise of a mere man of the world expressing natural thoughts in a common language, Montaigne concealed a spirit of lofty and audacious inquiry. BUCKLE.

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came within the range of his faculties, fearless of the deductions others might make from them and withal modest in the expression of his own.[2] Right or wrong he wrote "in good faith."

Like the medical writer handicapped by an ever-changing vehicle of expression, an ever-altering nomenclature and phraseology liable to leave him stranded in the ranks of the obsolete, Montaigne wrote while the French language was in transition, an unstable medium; wrote with a brightness, a lightness of touch, an insouciance without precedent or imitation, he and Rabelais being the last to fashion its plastic shape before the stabilizing influence of the Academy.[3] But his homely, graphic phrases, his

[2] He was very cautious, and yet he was very bold. He was cautious, since he would not believe strange things because they had been handed down by his forefathers; and he was bold, since he was undaunted by the reproaches with which the ignorant, who love to dogmatize, always cover those whose knowledge makes them ready to doubt. BUCKLE.

Lamartine described Montesquieu and Montaigne as "those two great republicans of French thought." (*Histoire des Girondins.*)

[3] Depuis Rabelais et Montaigne les progrès de la langue ont fait perdre bien des vieilles richesses. GEORGE SAND: *La Mare au Diable.*

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vivid touch, will always be in fashion like the language of the King James version of the Bible. And so, in medicine, we shall always know what our predecessors meant by a clyster whether it be the passing fashion to say énema or enéma. Montaigne's style was simple in so far that he was guilty of no affectation, no striving for effect. "May I use no words but those which are current in the Paris markets," he explained; and medical writers who cannot call a spade a spade, who prefer "ecchymosis of the subpalpebral areolar tissue" to "a black eye," should take a leaf from his notebook.

Montaigne in his "Essays" pretends to no epoch-making discovery in the realms of human thought and claims to enunciate nothing novel or startling.[4] His study was mankind, with himself as the readiest subject of practical dissection. His comments are like the clinical notes of the general practitioner and if his writings were to become inaccessible to the modern reader we would still be under obligations to him for all the

[4] On the contrary, Buckle, in his "History of Civilization in England," says: "The publication of the essays of Montaigne forms an epoch not only in the literature but in the civilization of France."

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delightful things that have been written about him and them. Many are the hypotheses and speculations he builds on the data acquired. A further analogy between Montaigne and the general run of physicians is that he had to take many of his authorities at secondhand. He read his favorite Plutarch in Amyot's translation for he knew no Greek. Just as we must accept the dicta of technical investigators and sometimes be compelled to hear them confuted, Montaigne was at least once openly confronted with Amyot's mistakes, and he still suffers for the inaccuracy of those he quoted.

Like the average doctor, Montaigne was a poor business man and but for an efficient, capable and faithful wife his estate would have gone to pot. He wrote a bad hand, was extremely forgetful and strangely impractical in many of the ordinary affairs of life. A few passages which follow give his own estimate of his shortcomings.

There is not a man living, whom it would so little become to speak of memory as myself, for I have none at all; and do not think that the world has again another so treacherous as mine. (Of Liars.)

Agility and address I never had and yet am

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the son of a very active and spritely father, and that continued to be so to an extreme old age. I have seldom known any man of his condition, his equal in all bodily exercises; as I have seldom met with any who have not excelled me, except in running, at which I was pretty good. In music or singing, for which I have a very unfit voice, or to play on any sort of instrument, they could never teach me anything.... My hands are so clumsy, that I cannot so much as write so as to read it myself, so that I had rather do what I have scribbled over again, than to take upon me the trouble to correct it, and do not read much better than I write. I cannot handsomely fold up a letter, nor could ever make a pen, or carve at table worth a pin, nor saddle a horse, nor carry a hawk, and fly her, nor hunt the dogs, nor lure a hawk, nor speak to a horse. In fine, my bodily qualities are very well suited to those of my soul, there is nothing spritely, only a full and firm vigor. I am patient enough of labor and pains, but it is only when I go voluntary to the work, and only so long as my own desire prompts me to it. (Of Presumption.)

My library, which is of the best sort of country libraries, is situated in a corner of my house; if anything comes into my head that I have a mind to look on or to write, lest I should forget it in but going cross the court.

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I am fain to commit it to the memory of some other. If I venture in speaking to digress never so little from my subject, I am infallibly lost, which is the reason that I keep myself in discourse strictly close. I am forced to call the men that serve me either by the names of their offices, or their country; for names are very hard for me to remember. I can tell indeed that there are three syllables, that it has a harsh sound, and that it begins or ends with such a letter, but that's all: and if I should live long, I do not think but I should forget my own name, as some others have done. (Of Presumption.)

Montaigne was the apostle of nature, the champion of common sense, radical but conservative, a professed follower of the middle path yet able to rise above convention when it confined and restricted instead of protecting him. His attitude to ultimate truth was the scientific one. He was open to conviction; disinclined to hold anything incredible or impossible. Dowden says that "a fact was of value to him as a means of attaining a truth." What is more, he could follow a train of reasoning from circumstances by no means established as facts if any useful conclusion could thereby

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be arrived at, availing himself alike of the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* method. "Great abuse in the world is begot, or, to speak more boldly, all the abuses of the world are begot by our being taught to be afraid of professing our ignorance, and that we are bound to accept all things we are not able to refute." (Of Cripples.)

For the type of science and learning that desiccates the soul and makes complacent, conceited pedants he had no use but he was in himself an admirable exponent of the value of true culture.

His belief and unbelief[5] were combined very much as they are in many a physician for whom a certain rationalism has been grafted by the character of his studies on a personality inclined to faith, a faith built up rather than shattered by intimate acquaintance with much holy living and dying.[6]

Like the physician, Montaigne lived ever with death. Not that he frequently observed

[5] Celui qui a répandu et popularisé en France le scepticisme, c'est Montaigne. COUSIN: *Histoire générale de la philosophie.*

[6] His religion at best is an anxious wish, — like that of Rabelais, a great Perhaps. CARLYLE.

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the material phenomena of dissolution; but this inevitable and stupendous contingency, life's setting and background, was like the ravine on one side of a mountain road, not precluding enjoyment of the scenery but reminding one of the need to put one's feet down warily. But enough of these attempted and perhaps superficial parallelisms and analogies.

The purpose of this monograph is to present together all the facts relating to Montaigne's physical life—his ancestry and offspring, his appearance and make-up, his marriage; to report some of the natural phenomena that interested him; to recite the story of his bodily afflictions and his struggle for health; to set forth his attitude to medicine and the grounds therefor.

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MONTAIGNE AND MEDICINE

CHAPTER I

Heredity and Physical Characteristics

ICHEL Eyquem de Montaigne was born on February 28, 1533, at the Château Montaigne, near the small town of Bergerac[1] and the important city of Bordeaux, in Périgord. He made his appearance on the scene of life between eleven o'clock and noon, so he tells us, and thus was a departure from the rule since one's début in life's drama is commonly made at about the hour of sunrise. His father was a wealthy burgher, a wine merchant of good, middle class French stock with, perhaps, an admixture of British blood from the days of

[1] Bergerac, a stronghold of Calvinism in the sixteenth century. Now the center of a brisk trade in truffles.

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the Plantagenet ascendency in Aquitaine. In earlier generations the family business had been fish rather than wine. His mother was Antoinette de Louppes, Lopes or Lopez, of Toulouse. She was of Jewish extraction, the family, originally of Villa Nova near Toledo, having been expelled from Spain (or Portugal). Her ancestors had been merchants or physicians. She and her parents adhered to the Huguenot persuasion. Antoinette lived for seventy-three years after the marriage contracted with Peter Montaigne on his return from military service in Italy under Francis I.[2] The heart he offered was whole, the body untainted by any physical impurity. Montaigne was the third child by this marriage but the eldest of those who lived to grow up.

[2] The Italian expeditions of Charles VIII, Louis XII and Francis I were fruitful of political disturbance for the invaded territory but conferred no direct benefits either political or military on France. They did serve, however, to disseminate the ideas due to the Renaissance and gave an impulse to literature and art. Montaigne tells us that his father, who had no learning, was thoroughly imbued with admiration for the new culture.

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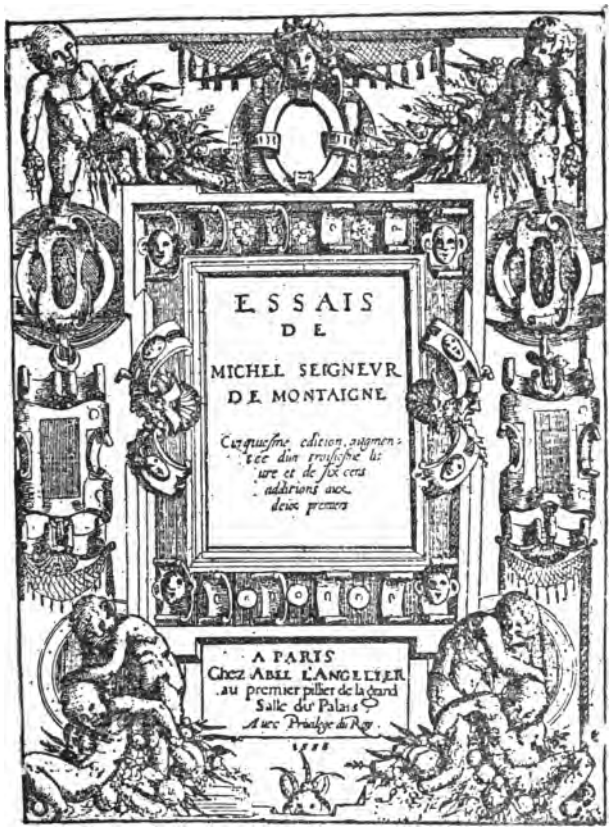

Facsimile of the title page of Montaigne's "Essays" (Edition of 1588).

(*From "Montaigne, L'Homme et L'Oeuvre," by P. Bonnefon, Paris,* 1893.)

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Montaigne adored his father and honored his memory to the last.[3] He says of him:

His behavior was grave, humble and modest; he was very solicitous of neatness and decency both in his person and clothes, whether on horseback, or afoot; he was exceeding punctual of his word; and of a conscience and religion generally tending rather towards superstition than otherwise. For a man of little stature, very strong, well proportioned, and well knit, of a pleasing countenance inclining to brown, and very adroit in all noble exercises. I have yet in the house to be seen canes powr'd full of lead, with which, they say, he exercised his arms for throwing the bar, or the stone; and shoes with leaden soles to make him after lighter for running, or leaping. Of his vaulting he has left little miracles behind him: I have seen him, when past three-score, laugh at our exercises, and throw himself in his furred gown into the saddle, make the tour of a table upon his thumbs, and scarce ever mount the stairs into his chamber without taking three or four steps at a time: and swore he was a virgin at

[3] "The best father that ever was," to quote Montaigne. The grateful acknowledgment of all he owes to his father, his reverence for him, remind one of the opening paragraphs of the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius.

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his marriage; and yet it was after a long practice of arms beyond the mountains; of which war he has left us a paper-journal under his own hand, wherein he has given a precise account from point to point of all passages both relating to the public and to himself. And was also married at a well advanced maturity in the year 1528, the three and thirtieth year of his age, upon his way home from Italy. (Of Drunkenness.)

He himself, though not lacking in health and vigor, was no match for his father who was good at every athletic exercise, knew no illness and took no medicine until he became, late in life, the victim of stone. "I hardly ever find anyone who cannot outdo me, save in running, in the which I used to have a mediocre success.... In dancing and tennis, in wrestling, I have never been able to acquire more than a very slight and ordinary efficiency; in swimming, fencing, vaulting, and jumping, none at all." (Of Presumption.)

Montaigne's rearing was peculiar. Corporal punishment was forbidden. Teaching was by influence not compulsion. Everything was to be simplicity, gentleness and kindness. Anything that might jar or shock

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the nervous system was ruled out. He was awakened by the sound of music, his father "being of opinion, it did trouble and disturb the brains of children suddenly to wake them in the morning, and to snatch them violently and over hastily from sleep, (wherein they are much more profoundly involved than we) he only caused me to be wakened by the sound of some musical instrument. . . . For, tho I was of a strong and healthful constitution, and of a disposition tolerably sweet and tractable; yet I was withal so heavy, idle, and indisposed that they could not rouse me from this stupidity to any exercise of recreation, nor get me out to play." (Education of Children.) He was brought up among peasants with a view to encouraging hardihood and fostering physical adaptability and was committed to teachers and companions who spoke Latin so that this might be his first, his natural language. One of his earliest tutors was a doctor of German descent "who since died a famous physician in France."

As a lad he was not overzealous in study. He says that he was rather lethargic, not so much in danger of doing wrong as of doing nothing. He was a dreamer out of

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Portrait of Montaigne from an engraving by Augustin de Saint-Aubin.

(From "Montaigne, L'Homme et L'Oeuvre," by P. Bonnefon, Paris, 1893.)

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touch with the practical issues of life, a disposition favored rather than corrected by a peculiar bringing up which with all its effort to be sedative and not stimulating did not prevent him from developing into a man of nerves; of a sensitive, susceptible temperament. He analyzed this condition when he said:

The very sight of another's pain does materially work upon me, and I naturally usurp the sense of a third person to share with him in his torment. A perpetual cough in another tickles my lungs and throat. I more unwillingly visit the sick I love, and am by duty interested to look after, than those I care not for, and from whom I have no expectation. I take possession of the disease I am concerned at and lay it too much to heart, and do not at all wonder that fancy should distribute fevers, and sometimes kill such as allow too much scope, and are too willing to entertain it. Simon Thomas was a great physician of his time. I remember, that happening one day at Toulouse[4] to meet him

[4] Toulouse, founded before the Christian era, became the center of Visigothic power in the fifth century. For five hundred years it was governed by the Counts of that name. Here was established the tribunal of the Inquisition. From 1562 to 1572 it was the scene of vigorous persecution of the

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at a rich old fellow's house, who was troubled with naughty lungs, and discoursing with his patient about the method of his cure; he told him, that one thing which would be very conducing to it, was to give me such occasion to be pleased with his company, that I might come often to see him, by which means and by fixing his eyes upon the freshness of my complexion, and his imagination upon the sprightliness and vigour that glowed in my youth, and possessing all his senses with the flourishing age wherein I then was, his habit of body might peradventure be amended, but he forgot to say

---

Huguenots. The beautiful cathedral has in one of the choir stalls a carving of a man with a pig's head supposed to be a caricature of Calvin. A school of medicine was incorporated with the University in the thirteenth century. It was here that Raymond de Sébonde taught medicine and theology at the beginning of the fifteenth century. He wrote in a jargon of Latin and Spanish on "Natural Theology." At his father's request Montaigne translated this work and then felt inspired to write his famous defence or "Apology" for the writer's views. For one man to teach both medicine and theology was not very uncommon in the olden time. Coryat mentions G. Gratarola of Bergamo "by profession a physician and an excellent man in that faculty who applied himself to divinity," became a Protestant and removed to the University of Bâle where he spent the greater part of his life after his conversion.

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that mine at the same time might be made worse. (Force of the Imagination.)

He required periods of privacy and leisure for accomplishment as well as for comfort. "For my own part, I confess, I cannot forbear starting when the rattle of a harquebuse thunders in my ears on a sudden, and in a place where I am not to expect it, which I have also observed in others, braver fellows than I." (Of Constancy.) He was never good at games or manly exercises except those of running and riding. His passion for horses is amply proved by many sympathetic references to them and though he professed no great skill as a horseman he rode much, both when sick and well. In his travels he noted everything that he ran upon connected with equitation.

I do not willingly alight when I am once on horseback; for it is the place where, whether well, or sick, I find myself most at ease. (Of Horses Dressed to the Menage, etc.)

I had taken a horse that went very easy upon his pace, but was not very strong. Being upon my return home, a sudden occasion falling out to make use of this horse in a kind of service that he was not acquainted with; one of my train, a lusty proper fellow, mounted upon a

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strong German horse, that had a very ill mouth, but was otherwise vigorous and unsoiled, to play the Bravo, and appear a better man than his fellows, comes thundering full speed in the very track where I was, rushing like a Colossus upon the little man, and the little horse, with such a career of strength and weight, that he turned us both over and over topsy turvy, with our heels in the air! So that there lay the horse overthrown and stunned with the fall, and I ten or twelve paces from him stretched out at length, with my face all battered and broken, my sword which I had in my hand, above ten paces beyond that, and my belt broke all to pieces, without motion or sense any more than a stock. 'Twas the only swoon I was ever in till this hour in my life. (Use makes Perfectness.)

A good rider does not so much mend my seat, as an awkward attorney, or a Venetian on horseback[5]; and a clownish way of speaking does more reform mine, than the quaintest dialect. The ridiculous and simple look of

[5] The Venetians seldom or never come on horseback and vulgar jests are raised on them for ignorance of riding, as of one who would hire one horse to carry as many as came with him in his boat and of another who, ready to take horse, asked how the wind stood, as thinking he could no more ride than sail against the wind. FYNES MORYSON: *Itinerary*.

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Chereau's portrait of Montaigne.
(*From "Montaigne, L'Homme et L'Oeuvre," by P. Bonnefon, Paris*, 1893.)

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another, does always advertise and advise me; that which pricks rouses and incites much better than that which tickles. (Of the Act of Conferring.)

I had rather be a good horseman than a good logician.... I can keep on horseback, as much tormented with the stone as I am, without alighting or being weary, eight or ten hours together.... My horses perform the better, for never any horse tired under me, that was able to hold out the first day's journey: I water them at evry brook I meet, and have only a care they have so much way to go before I come to my inn, as will warm the water in their bellies.... I feel death always twitching me by the throat, or by the back: but I am of another temper, 'tis in all places alike to me; yet, might I have my choice, I think I should rather choose to die on horseback than in a bed, out of my own house, and far enough from my own people.... I should choose to pass away the greatest part of my life on horseback. (Of Vanity.)

As horses that are led make several bounds and curvetts, but 'tis always at the length of the collar, and they still follow him that leads them....Horses for the most part neighing, and swans singing when they die. (Of Physiognomy.)

It was always his habit, whether he purposed to halt on the road or not, to let

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his horses have oats to eat in the morning at the inn before starting. "After faring seven leagues, we all arrived fasting late at night at Stertzing." He thought the Swiss gave their horses too much to eat. On leaving Parma "we changed horses at every post and for 2 posts I made them go at full gallop so as to test the strength of my loins. I felt no ill effects or weariness therefrom." At Lyons he bought "three strong service horses, with fresh cut tails, for two hundred crowns, having purchased on the previous day of Malesieu a pacing horse for fifty crowns and another curtal nag for thirty-three." He thought it folly to bring good horses to Tuscany as the quality of hay was poor. The inhabitants unbridled and unsaddled their horses and let them drink all the water they wanted to when on the road!

As a young man he was fond of rich dress, ambitious, perhaps dissipated. The ambition[6] never utterly died out though its nature

[6] Montaigne in his youth coveted the distinction of being admitted to the order of St. Michael, and while serving as a counsellor at Bordeaux his frequent journeys to Paris on semi-official business brought him into contact with the court and his personal charm won him the favorable notice of Henry III who

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and end changed with his growth. That he was dissipated is a possible deduction from some of those many frank statements which have to be taken with a grain of salt. "I have formerly loved cards and dice, but have long since left them off, only for this reason, that though I carry my losses as handsomely as another, I was not well satisfied and quiet within." In the same way it may be concluded that he overtaxed and abused his health in youth. Probably in the reaction from the emotions aroused by La Boétie's death—Montaigne was a passionate votary of friendship, and life gave him one and only one friend that

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made him a gentleman of the bedchamber. It was either this monarch or his brother Charles IX who presented him with the collar of the order in question. Later in life Montaigne conceived the idea of being made a citizen of Rome and while sojourning there in 1581 he "set all his wits to work to this end." He had "some difficulty in the matter but succeeded at last" and was presented with the freedom of the city by a papal bull embellished with gold letters and seals, a testimonial which occasioned him an almost childish satisfaction.

Montaigne was invested with knighthood by Gaston de Foix by order of the king, 1571. He was made Gentleman of the Bedchamber by Henry IV.

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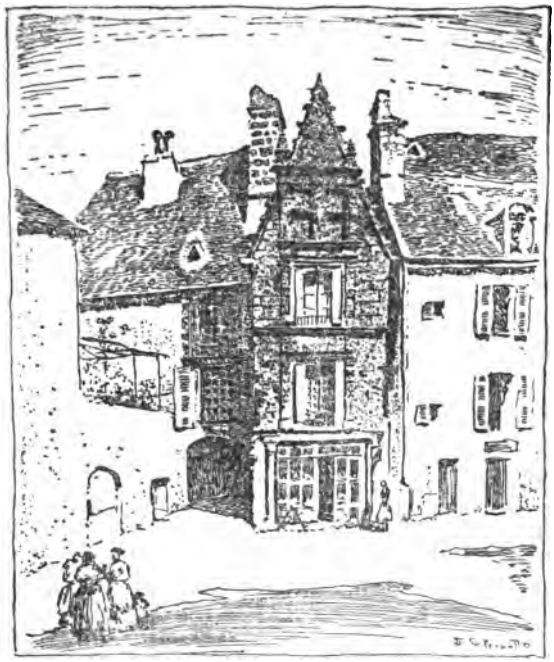

The house at Sarlat where Étienne de la Boétie was born.[7]
(From "Through the French Provinces" by Ernest C. Peixotto, New York, 1909.)

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satisfied every craving and developed every faculty—he deliberately sought distraction in the frivolities of his time though such pursuits were essentially foreign to his nature.

I have never put myself to great pains to curb the desires by the which I have found myself beset. My virtue is a virtue, or rather an innocence, which is purely random and accidental. By lucky chance I come of a race famous for its honour, and of an excellent father. I know not whether some part of his

[7] The friendship of Montaigne and La Boétie was one of the great classic friendships of all time, like that of Damon and Pythias, Achilles and Patroclus, David and Jonathan. Montaigne never recovered from the sorrow occasioned by La Boétie's death. It left a permanent void in his life but the beneficial effect of the association was also lasting. It spiritualized Montaigne and purified his mental vision

Étienne de la Boétie was born at Sarlat in a mansion which dated from the time of Francis I and is still standing. "Sarlat is a fine old place with somber, twisting streets lined with splendid stone houses, whose tall turrets and high-pitched slate roofs and whose gothic portals leading to spiral stairways evoke the heyday of its prosperity—the time of Louis XII and his immediate successors—perfect object lessons of the domestic architecture of the middle ages." ERNEST PEIXOTTO: *Through the French Provinces.*

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tastes have passed into me; or whether home example, and the good teaching I had in childhood, have helped me without my being aware; or else whether I was born thus, but, anyhow, I hold most vices in abhorrence. (Of Cruelty.)

MARRIAGE

Two years after La Boétie's death Montaigne, at the age of thirty-three, married Françoise de la Chassaigne, a woman of good, middle class family and respectable fortune. Françoise made him a good wife, the union fully meeting the husband's requirements. We have no way of knowing how satisfactory it was to his wife. Presumably it had all the disappointments usually accruing to the helpmate of a student and scholar. Montaigne was reasonably faithful. Françoise apparently discharged her full duty as wife and mother, proving the capable business partner which the Frenchman requires and demonstrating more than the usual capacity for administration since the essayist was without knowledge or capacity for farming, business, or the direction of an estate. Françoise, in addition, played the Good

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Samaritan and Lady Bountiful for the rural neighborhood of the château and doubtless got some pleasure out of life in this rôle and by doctoring the sick, using the same medicine—one which she did not take herself—for fifty different maladies and always obtaining wonderful results.

Montaigne had the typical Gallic idea of marriage as an institution and perhaps something more:

For if one doth not always fulfill one's duty, at least one must always love it; and one must recognize the treachery of marrying without espousing one another. . . . Marriage hath for its share, usefulness, justice, honour, and constancy—a flat pleasure but a universal one. Love is founded upon delight alone, and giveth it, truly, of a kind more poignant, more caressive, more vital. (On Some Verses of Virgil.)

A man doth not marry for himself, whatever people say; he marrieth, quite as much, if not more, for his posterity and his family. The uses and interests of marriage concern our race, they reach far beyond ourselves. (Of Vanity.)

Marriage meaneth a kind of converse which easily cooleth through propinquity—a converse which is harmed by assiduity. Every strange woman seemeth unto us a comely woman; and

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every man knoweth by experience that the continual sight of one another cannot give the pleasure which cometh of taking and leaving by fits and starts. As for me, these interruptions fill me with a fresh love towards my family, and restore me in pleasanter fashion to the groove of my home. And I know that kindliness hath arms long enough to stretch and join across from one corner of the world to another —more especially this married sort of kindliness, in the which there existeth a constant intercommunication of services which awaken obligation and remembrance. (Of Vanity.)

The fact that happy marriage is so rare is a sign of its value. When we fashion it finely and take it the right way, there is no nobler institution in society. (On Some Verses of Virgil.)

He was far from being a Lothario and yet by no means a truly domestic character. "And truly I was then drawn unto it more ill prepared and less tractable than I am at present after having made trial of it; and as libertine as I am taken to be, I have in truth more strictly observed the laws of wedlock than I either promised or hoped." He considered mutual respect and identity of interests the foundation of proper conjugal relations, but there is genuine tenderness

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and appreciation of her many good qualities in the letter of condolence addressed to his wife in relation to the loss of their first child. Montaigne's marriage and his attitude to love and women have been much discussed. He was not above nor beneath observing the conventions, proprieties and externals of a gentleman's position in the social arrangement. For the *marriage à la mode* in Hogarth's sense he had no use. The marriage after the good old French fashion he respected. It agreed with him. The union was marked by little romantic passion but by much respect and consideration on both sides. Six children were born to the couple, all girls, only one of whom attained adolescence.[8] Montaigne's paternal affection centered principally around the creations of his brain. If not a model of virtue, he certainly was above the bulk of his contemporaries in the matter of morals; but not so much through any ardent belief in the obligation to be pure as from a certain natural fastidiousness, clean instincts and

[8] Leonora. She was twice married. It was through the children by her second husband that Montaigne's descendants became allied to the de Ségur family.

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a distaste for vice. In support of this it would not be amiss to quote Bacon: "For cleanness of body was ever esteemed to proceed from a due reverence to God, to society, and to ourselves."

Montaigne maintained with great earnestness throughout his writings that it was untenable to think of soul and body as separate and independent entities and he indignantly denies that woman's love is the wholly spiritual thing that some pretend. His writings have some pointed allusions to the peculiarities of the fair, both maids and wives, but he may be regarded as an early recognizer, if not an apostle, of the doctrine of the equality of the sexes, holding that "apart from education and custom the difference is not great."[9] He is constantly harping upon the indivisibility, the interdependence of the body and the soul.

Those do wrong who wish to disjoin our two great halves, and isolate them one from the other. They should, on the contrary, be joined and reunited. The soul must be commanded

[9] Their wives have sense like them: they see, and smell,
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
As husbands have. SHAKESPEARE: *Othello.*

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View of the Château Montaigne. The façade towards the courtyard.

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not to draw aside, to keep itself apart, to despise and desert the body—indeed, it cannot possibly do so excepting through some ill-shaped, apish trick. Rather should the soul strike fresh alliance with the body, embrace it, cherish it, control and counsel it, reestablish it and bring it back when it swerveth. In short, the soul should marry the body and serve it as a husband, to the end that their property should not appear to be different and contrary, but one and the same. (Of Presumption.)

That opinion which disdaineth our natural life is ridiculous, for, after all, our life is our being, our all. It is against Nature that we should despise ourselves and set ourselves not to care about ourselves. This is a peculiar malady. No other creature is known to hate and despise itself; and it is for a like vanity that we desire to be different from what we are. (The Custom of the Isle of Cea.)

'Tis not the soul, 'tis not a body that we are training up, but a man, and we ought not to divide him. (Education of Children.)

For my part I must ingeniously declare, that the puff of every accident not only carries me along with it, according to its own proclivity, but that moreover I discompose, and trouble myself, by the instability of my own posture; and whoever will look narrowly into his own bosom, will hardly find himself twice

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Mademoiselle de Gournay, one of Montaigne's ardent admirers whom he called his "adopted daughter." She acted as one of the editors of an edition of his "Essays" published after his death.

(From the painting by Matheus, a copy of which appears in "Montaigne, L'Homme et L'Oeuvre," by P. Bonnefon, Paris, 1893.)

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in the same condition. I give my soul sometimes one face, and sometimes another, according to the side I turn her to. If I speak variously of myself, it is, because I consider myself variously. All contrarieties are there to be found, in one corner or another, or after one manner or another. Bashful, insolent, chaste, lustful, prating, silent, laborious, delicate, ingenious, heavy, melancholic, pleasant, lying, true, knowing, ignorant, liberal, covetous, and prodigal, I find all this in myself more or less according as I turn myself about; and whoever will sift himself to the bottom, will find in himself, even by his own judgment this volubility and discordance. In a word, I have nothing to say of myself entirely, simply, and solidly without mixture, and confusion. (Of the Inconstancy of Our Actions.)

To what end do we dismember by divorce, a building united by so mutual and brotherly a correspondence? Let us, on the contrary, repair and corroborate it by mutual offices, let the mind rouse and quicken the heaviness of the body, and the body stop and fix the levity of the soul. (Of Experience.)

The asceticism of the Middle Ages and of the early Church was abhorrent to him. He was too steeped in Latin and Greek lore, too much infected with the revival of

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respect for the human body that came with the Renaissance to tolerate the vilification of the body which passed for evidences of saintliness in anchorite and pilgrim.

'Tis always a soul, that by its faculty, reasons, remembers, comprehends, judges, desires, and exercises all its other operations by divers instruments of the body, as the pilot guides his ship according to his experience, one while straining or slacking the cordage, one while hoisting the main-yard, or removing the rudder, by one and the same strength carrying on so many several effects: and that it is lodged in the brain, which appears in that the wounds and accidents that touch that part, do immediately offend the faculties of the soul. (The Apology.)

His study of humanity and his reverence for nature convinced him of the oneness of man. His admiring disciple, Mlle. de Gournay, had caught the spirit of her master when she wrote this aphorism. "To the common herd the soul is only useful as salt is useful to a hog—to keep it from corruption."

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CHAPTER II

Personal Traits and Habits

A strange and unusual characteristic of Montaigne's youth was the very frequent thought of death and this, the natural accompaniment of middle age, became an ever-deepening shadow with the advent of sickness and invalidism. He did not fight against this inclination to ponder on dissolution as a morbid and perhaps dangerous one and when suffering and disease made death an ever-lurking presence at his elbow he entertained it and looked it squarely in the face.

There is nothing which I have more constantly entertained myself withal than imaginations of death, even in the most wanton season of my age. (That Men Are not to Judge of Our Happiness till after Death.) In the company of ladies, and in the height of mirth, some have perhaps thought me possessed with some jealousy, or meditating upon the uncertainty of some imagined hope, while I was entertaining myself with the remembrance of someone surprised a few days before with a burning fever

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of which he died returning from an entertainment like this with his head full of idle fancies of love and jollity, as mine was then, and that for ought I knew the same destiny was attending me. (Study of Philosophy is to Learn to Die.)

Later we shall quote him more extensively in this connection for it is here that his philosophy reaches its fastigium of grandeur and beauty.

There is a tinge of real regret in his comments on his height for he was below the average. Montaigne deemed dignity of stature an essential of manly beauty.

My height is rather below the average. This defect hath not only the drawback of ugliness, but, in addition, that of inconvenience. A beautiful figure, in truth, is the only beauty allowed to men. For the rest, my figure is strong and well set, my face not fat but full, my complexion—between the jovial and the melancholy—showeth moderately sanguine and of tempered heat. For my health, it is steady and gay. . . Now I am of something lower than the middle stature, a defect that not only borders upon deformity, but carries withal a great deal of inconvenience along with it, especially those who are in command; for the authority which a graceful presence, and a majestic

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mien beget, is wanting. . . The other beauties belong to women, the beauty of stature is the only beauty of men. Where there is a contemptible stature, neither the largeness and roundness of the forehead nor the whiteness and sweetness of the eyes, nor the moderate proportion of the nose, nor the littleness of the ears and mouth, nor the evenness and whiteness of the teeth, nor the thickness of a well-set brown beard, shining like the husk of a chestnut, nor curled hair, nor the just proportion of the head, nor a fresh complexion, nor a pleasing air of a face, nor a body without any offensive scent, nor the just proportion of limbs, can make a handsome man. I am, as to the rest, strong, and well knit, my face is not puffed, but full, and my complexion betwixt jovial and melancholic, moderately sanguine and hot. (Of Presumption.)

His garments were usually either white or black and in walking or riding he carried a cane. He set forth on his journeying with a coat of no fashion trimmed with rough hair, and provided with two caps. His nether garments he did not vary with the season. Of his personal habits and tastes he writes freely and fully. He was absent-minded and forgetful, indeed his memory was the poor-

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est imaginable. He slept nine hours a day, but had no siesta. Two meals sufficed him and he preferred them simple. He had a keen relish for fish, a real weakness for crawfish on which he fed every day for the first two hundred leagues of his foreign travels; but none were set before him at Rovere and that circumstance, or the equanimity with which Montaigne endured the omission, astonished his scribe.

Long sittings at meat both trouble me, and do me harm; for, be it for want of better countenance, or that I have accustomed myself to it from a child, I eat all the while I sit. Therefore it is, that at my own house, though the meals there are of the shortest, I usually sit down a little while after the rest. . . . They whose concern it is to have a care of me, may very easily hinder me from eating anything they think will do me harm; for in such things I never covet nor miss anything I do not see: but withal, if it once comes in my sight, 'tis in vain to persuade me to forbear, so that when I design to fast, I must be parted from those that eat suppers, and must have only so much given me, as is required for a regular collation; for if I sit down to table, I forget my resolution. When I order my cook to alter the manner of

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dressing any dish of meat, all my family know what it means, that my stomach is out of order, and that I shall scarce touch it; I love to have all meats that will endure it very little boiled or roasted, and love them mightily mortified, and even to stinking in many. Nothing but hardness generally offends me; of any other quality I am as patient and indifferent as any man I have known; so that contrary to the common humor, even in fish, it often happens, that I find them both too fresh and too firm: not for want of teeth, which I ever had good, even to excellence, and that age does but now begin to threaten at this time of my life. I have ever been used every morning to rub them with a napkin, and before and after dinner. God is favorable to those whom he makes to die by degrees;[1] 'tis the only benefit of old age; the last death will be so much the less painful; it will kill but a quarter of a man; or but half a one at most. I have one tooth lately fallen out without drawing, and without pain; it was the natural term of its duration. . . Eating too much hurts me, but for the quality of what I eat, I do not yet certainly know that any sort of meat disagrees with my stomach;

[1] First our pleasures die—and then
Our hopes, and then our fears—and when
These are dead, the debt is due,
Dust claims dust—and we die too. SHELLEY.

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neither have I observed that either full-moon or decrease, spring or autumn, are hurtful to me. We have in us motions that are inconstant, and for which no reason can be given. For example, I found radishes first grateful to my stomach, since that nauseous, and now at present grateful again. In several other things likewise, I find my stomach and appetite to vary after the same manner. I have changed and changed again from white to claret, from claret to white. I am a great lover of fish, and consequently make my fasts feasts, and my feasts fasts; and believe what some people say, that it is more easy of digestion than flesh. . . I never keep my legs and thighs warmer in winter than in summer, one single pair of silk stockings is all: I have suffered myself for the relief of my rheumatism to keep my head warmer, and my belly upon the account of my colic: my diseases in a few days habituated themselves, and disdained my ordinary provisions. I was presently got from a single cap to a napkin, and from a napkin to a quilted cap. The belly-pieces of my doublet serve only for decency, they signify nothing, if I do not add a hare's skin or a stomacher, and wear a gallot upon my head. . . I am not very apt to be thirsty, either well or sick, my mouth is indeed apt to be dry, but without thirst; and commonly I never drink but with thirst that is created by eating, and

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then I drink as hard as any. I drink pretty well for a man of my pitch: in summer, and at a hungry meal, I do not only exceed the limits of Augustus, that drank but thrice precisely; but not to offend Democrates his rule, who forbade that men should stop at four times, as an unlucky number; I proceed for need to the fifth glass, about three half pints. For the little glasses are my favorites; and I take a delight to drink them off, which other people avoid as an indecent thing. I mix my wine sometimes with half, sometimes the third part water; and when I am at home, by an ancient custom that my father's physician prescribed both to him and himself, they mix that which is designed for me in the buttery three or four hours before 'tis brought in. . . I fear a fog, and fly from smoke, as from the plague. . . and amongst the difficulties of war, reckon the choking dust they make us ride in a whole day together. I have a free and easy respiration, and my colds for the most part go off without offense to the lungs, and without a cough. The heat of summer is more an enemy to me than the cold of winter. (Of Experience.)

Melon was his preferred fruit. He wanted his bread unsalted but was fond of salt meats and likewise of sauces. A variety of dishes he abominated. He ate with his

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fingers,[2] in a nervous haste that often made him bite fingers, tongue and lips. This was not gluttony. With his usual calm indifference to the effect of his revelations upon the reader he tells us in this connection that there were men in Rome who taught graceful mastication just as graceful carriage in walking is taught. This is to admit that he presented a sorry picture at table and that he did not greatly care.

Eating rather bored him save in pleasant company. The numerous allusions to food are made by a man who makes no pretense, has nothing to hide, recks not of critics and who from the time he began to write had increasingly to consider what he ate on account of his health. A tester and bed curtains were essential to his comfort and he heartily approved of German stoves and of a warm bedroom, being in mortal dread of chilling by the night air or that of the early morning.

A German made me very merry at Augusta ("Augsburg") with disputing the inconvenience of our hearths by the same arguments which we commonly make use of in decrying their stoves:

[2] They say fingers were made before forks and hands before knives. SWIFT.

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Montaigne's house at Bordeaux.

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for, to say the truth, that smothered heat, and then the scent of that heated matter of which the fire is composed, very much offend such as are not used to them, not me; but as to the rest, the heat being always equal, constant and universal, without flame, without smoke, and without the wind that comes down our chimneys, they may many ways endure comparison with ours. Why do we not imitate the Roman architecture? For, they say, that anciently fires were not made in their houses, but on the outside, and at the foot of them, from whence the heat was conveyed to the whole fabric by pipes contrived in the wall, which were drawn twining about the rooms that were to be warmed: which I have seen plainly described somewhere in Seneca. (Of Experience.)

But he required no warming pan and preferred a hard bed. He was no Sybarite.

No season is enemy to me, but the parching heat of a scorching sun; for the umbrellas made use of in Italy, ever since the time of the ancient Romans, more burden a man's arm than they relieve his head[3]. . . I love rain,

[3] Thomas Coryat in "Crudities" writes illuminatingly on this subject: "Also many of them do carry other fine things of a far greater price, that will cost at the least a duckat, which they commonly call in the Italian tongue umbrellas, that is, things

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and to dabble in the dirt, as well as tame ducks do; the change of air and climate never concern me: every sky is alike. I am only troubled with inward alterations, which I breed within myself, and those are not so frequent in travel. . . .I have learned to travel after the Spanish fashion, and to make but one stage of a great many miles; and in excessive heats, I always travel by night, from sunset to sunrising. The other method of baiting by the way, in haste and hurry to gobble up a dinner, is

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that minister shadow unto them for shelter against the scorching heat of the sun. These are made of leather something answerable to the form of a little canopy, and hooped in the inside with divers little wooden hoops that extend the umbrella in a pretty large compass. They are used especially by horsemen, who carry them in their hands when they ride, fastening the end of the handle upon one of their thighs, and they impart so long a shadow unto them, that it keeps the heat of the sun from the upper parts of their bodies."

It was on the way to Cremona that Coryat first noticed the general use of fans which he considers a frivolous subject but adverts to nevertheless. "These fannes both men and women of the country doe carry to coole themselves withall in the time of heate by the often fanning of their faces. Most of them are very elegant and pretty things." He records that they were beautifully painted, decorated with verses or emblems and with views of some noted Italian city and a brief description of them.

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especially in short days, very inconvenient. (Of Vanity.)

Prior to the advent of his lithemia we may conceive him to have possessed a rugged constitution, full of nervous energy. Slenderly built but energetic, of that resistant type familiarly designated "tough as whitleather," sickness never weakened his will and but little hampered him in the execution of it. The same nicety of taste which made him lead a clean life, utterly independent of conscientious or religious scruples, made him careful of his person. He had a real physical modesty but was not foolish, and heaps ridicule on Cyrus and Maximilian for their extreme unwillingness to uncover the person. If he ate with his fingers he made full use of a napkin, delighted to have one after each course. He could not be comfortable unless he washed on rising. He cleaned his teeth twice a day with a napkin. He appears to have been hypermetropic. "My sight, is perfect, entire, and discovers at a very great distance, but is soon weary, which makes me that I cannot read long, but am forced to have one to read to me." (Of Presumption.) "I am to this hour ignorant of the use of spectacles,

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and can see as far as ever I did, or any other. 'Tis true, that in the evening I begin to find a little trouble and weakness in my sight, if I read; an exercise that I have always found troublesome, especially by night." (Of Experience.)

Occasionally Montaigne fasted not as an act of religious observance but for the physical benefit he experienced from it. "Repletion hath in my case a cruelly sluggish effect on activity." He liked to rest after meals and to listen to, but not engage in, talk. Before meals he found it wholesome and pleasant to wax even vociferous. He stood straight and held his head high; his step was firm, his gestures lively. His voice was of pleasing timbre. Compared to his father he confesses himself awkward. Thus in doffing his hat to a passing acquaintance in Rome he struck himself in the eye and was incommoded by the accident for several days.[4] The recital of this incident is

[4] I felt somewhat unwell [at Sinigaglia], for on the day I left Rome, when M. d'Ossat was walking with me, I saluted a gentleman we met and I did this in so maladroit a fashion that I injured the corner of my right eye with my right thumb, so much that it bled and remained much inflamed for a long time. MONTAIGNE.

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typical of Montaigne. It has been said that "Tom Jones" is the only faithful portrait of a man to be found in fiction. In his description of himself Montaigne gives us a picture of a real character drawn with pitiless lack of reserve. In conversation he was voluble, imperious.

He was fond of hunting[5] though soft-hearted as regards the game.

I carry my feeling to such a degree of softness that I cannot see the neck of a fowl wrung without displeasure, and cannot bear to hear the wail of a hare caught by my hounds, although riding to the chase is one of my excessive pleasures. (Of Cruelty.)

He played with his cat and must have been rather fond of animals. He says of them.

[5] The King of Navarre visited Montaigne at his château in 1584 accompanied by some forty noblemen of his suite and by serving men and guards. Some of the royal party had to be lodged in neighboring villages. Montaigne states with pride that he was able to make the king perfectly comfortable and "he slept in my bed." The king was waited on at the table entirely by Montaigne's own people. Montaigne gave the king a deer hunt in his forest which occupied him for two days.

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Considering that the same Master hath given us lodging in this palace for his service, and that they belong, like us, to his family, nature hath good reason to enjoin upon us some kind of esteem and affection towards them. Indeed, when all is said, there existeth a common human duty, a certain respect the which attacheth us not only to the beasts who have life and sentiment, but even to the trees and plants. We owe justice to men, and grace and benignity to the other creatures, who are not capable of justice. There is a sort of intercourse between them and us, and a sort of mutual obligation. (Of Cruelty.)

In how many several sorts of ways do we speak to our dogs and they answer us. . . . In one kind of barking of a dog the horse knows there is anger. Of another sort of a bark he is not afraid. (The Apology.)

Movement and activity of body were curiously blended with a certain sluggishness. "I move with difficulty and am dilatory in all things: in getting up, in going to bed, at my meals. Seven o'clock is early for me, and where I am master I never dine before eleven, or sup till after six." (Of Presumption.) "My feet are so unsteady, so unsure, so ready to totter and to feel the earth crumble beneath them—my eyesight

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is so ill-regulated—that when I fast, I am another man than he who hath eaten a repast." (The Apology.) He could not keep his feet still but in his study he liked to perch them high in front of him. He got great comfort from scratching his head to provoke thought and regarded scratching generally as one of the little physical luxuries of life. "I do not remember that I ever had the itch, and yet scratching is one of nature's sweetest gratifications, and nearest at hand, but the smart follows too near. I use it most in my ears, which are often apt to itch.[6] I came into the world with all my senses entire, even to perfection, My stomach is commodiously good, as also is my head and my breath; and for the most part, uphold themselves so in the height of fevers." (Of Experience.)

Montaigne's health became seriously im-

[6] Walter Harris, writing in 1689, says that eczema and discharging ears were so common in children at this time that they were accepted as a regular part of nature's program. Montaigne's eczema was part of his gout. Fynes Moryson comments on the frequency of itch in Italy and the insouciance with which gentlemen and ladies in polite society scratched in public and sat down to meat afterwards without washing their hands.

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paired after he had been in retreat in his tower, devoted to study, reflection and writing for about six and a half years. His withdrawal to this sanctum in the first instance was doubtless induced in part by considerations of health.

Every man should have a back-shop all his own. . . in which he can establish his liberty, his chief refuge, his best solitude. And here it is that he must hold his ordinary intercourse with himself. (Of Solitude.)

Miserable, to my way of thinking, is he who hath no place where he can be at home to himself, where he can privily court himself: where he can hide himself. To me it is much more bearable to be always alone than never.[7] (Of Three Commerces.)

His beloved refuge, that famous temple of the soul but for which the world of letters and the world of thought would have been infinitely the poorer, had on the ground floor

[7] In exposition of this thought a number of writers, among them Shakespeare, Gibbon, Froude, Disraeli and Lowell, have expressed themselves pithily. Froude says: "The solitary side of our nature demands leisure for reflection upon subjects on which the dash and whirl of daily business, so long as its clouds rise thick about us, forbid the intellect to fasten itself."

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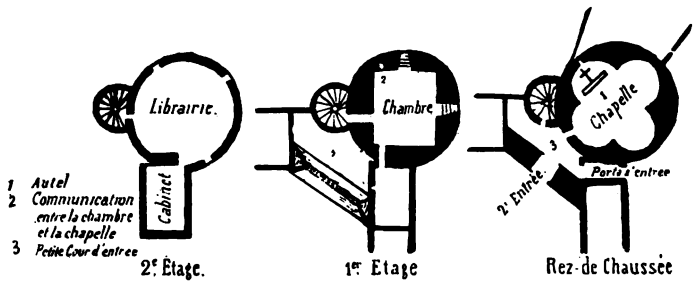
Plan and view of Montaigne's Tower, as it appeared in 1823.



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a chapel. Mass said there could be heard by the lord of the domain lying comfortably in bed above. The second story contained the library and a communicating chamber, cozy and warm. The regular bedroom was on the third story. The walls of the library were decorated with musical instruments, pictures, inscriptions. On the rafters were favorite sayings from Homer, Horace, Plato, Pliny, St. Paul, Terence, Ecclesiastes, the Psalms, etc. The books of which the owner was justly proud, numbered a thousand, a goodly and unusual collection for citizen or king.[8] Of these thousand volumes but seventy-six have been positively identified. Someone, by accident, picked up in a second hand shop in Paris his copy of Caesar's "Commentaries" with over six hundred annotations in the essayist's own hand. We know that he had a Greek Bible, Münster's "Cosmography"[9] (a sort of guide book to Europe), four works on theology—two of them heterodox—and five volumes on law and medicine

[8] La Boétie on his deathbed bequeathed his entire library to Montaigne.

[9] Sebastian Münster was for five years professor of Hebrew at Heidelberg where part of his Cosmography was written.

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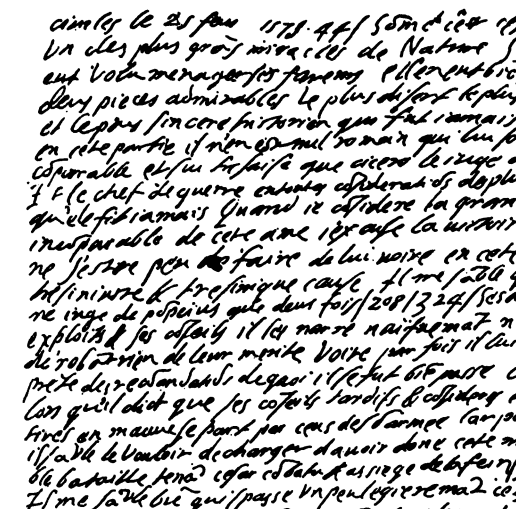
(Commence de lire ces livres des guerres)

Facsimile of Montaigne's annotations in his copy of Caesar's "Commentaries."

(From "Recherches sur Montaigne, Documents Inédits," by J. F. Payen, Paris, 1856.)

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respectively. In his retirement Montaigne turned to books. He could not play the gentleman farmer and cared nothing for the breeding of cattle nor did the country charm him except as it afforded quiet. He does not gaze from his window to note, like Horace, how deep the snow rests on hillside or mountain; his years of bucolic life enabled him to add nothing to the teachings of Virgil.

The employment a man should choose for a sedentary life, ought neither to be a laborious nor an unpleasing one, otherwise 'tis to no purpose at all to be retired, and this depends upon every one's liking, and humor; mine has no manner of complacency for husbandry, and such as love it, ought to apply themselves to it with moderation. (Of Solitude.)

I do not so much as understand the names of the chief instruments of husbandry, nor the most ordinary elements of agriculture, which the very children know; much less the mechanic arts, traffic, merchandise, the variety and nature of fruit, wines, and vines: nor how to make a hawk fly, nor to physic a horse, or a dog. And, since I must publish my whole shame, 'tis not above a month ago, that I was trapped in my ignorance of the use of leaven to make

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bread, or to what end it was to keep wine in the vat. (Of Presumption.)

Montaigne declined to attend, as was customary, the installation of his successor to the office of Mayor of Bordeaux because the plague was raging in the city. For this he has been blamed.[10] Taken by itself the incident seems prejudicial to his reputation but when we recall that on the occasion of La Boétie's last illness he remained constantly at his side though urged by the sick man only to pay frequent visits, because the malady might be contagious (plague was in the neighborhood), we get a deeper insight into the man. To risk his life for a mere form, in obedience to a tradition or custom, seemed foolish. It was something to reason about. Where friendship and love were concerned

[10] The population of Bordeaux in 1585 was less than 40,000. At the time of the pestilence there was a general exodus on the part of everyone who had the means of living elsewhere. The deaths from the plague in Bordeaux, during a period of a few months, were estimated at from 14,000 to 18,000.

It is to be remembered that residence in Bordeaux was not regarded as an essential obligation of the Mayor. Some of his predecessors had spent the entire period of their incumbency in Paris or elsewhere. His first election to the office occurred while he was abroad. He succeeded Marshal de Biron.

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there was no room for calculation. In the one case he was characteristically independent, indifferent to criticism, resolved to consult his own interests. In the other he gave no thought to the dictates of prudence.

He is well aware of the disposition to panic so common during epidemics, seems to realize that diseases have their definite period of incubation and appreciates the devitalizing effect of fear in certain maladies.

All diseases are then concluded to be the plague, and people do not stay to examine and be sure whether they have it or no. And the mischief on it is, that, according to the rules of art, in every danger that a man comes near, he must undergo a quarantine[11] in the suspense of

[11] They are careful to avoid infection of the plague and to that purpose in every city have magistrates for health. So as in times of danger when any city in or near Italy is infected travelers cannot pass by land except they bring a bolletino or certificate of their health from the place whence they come and otherwise must make la quarantina or trial of forty days for their health in a lazaretto or hospital for that purpose. But by sea generally both the men and all the goods of the ship, except they can make clear proof of health in the parts whence they come, must make the said trial of forty days especially ships coming from Constantinople which is seldom free from infection. FYNES MORYSON: *Itinerary*.

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his infirmity; your imagination all that while tormenting you at pleasure, and turning even your health itself into a fever; yet would not all this have gone very near to my heart, had I not withal been compelled to be sensible of others' sufferings, and miserable to serve six months together for a guide to this caravan: for I carry my antidotes within myself, which are resolution and patience. Apprehension, which is particularly feared in this disease, does not so much trouble me. And if, being alone, I should have taken it, it had been a more sprightly and a longer flight. 'Tis a kind of death, that I do not think of the worst sort; 'tis usually short, stupid, without pain, and consolated by the public condition; without ceremony, without mourning, and without a crowd. But as to the people about us, the hundredth part of them could not be saved. (Of Physiognomy.)

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CHAPTER III

An Observer and Recorder of Natural Phenomena

In his minute and full rehearsal of all the symptoms of La Boétie's last illness,[1] in his account of how, during those sad hours of waiting, they conversed together about what the ancient physicians said of the malady, Montaigne showed himself such a keen observer and recorder of the phenomena of disease that one is strengthened in the feeling, derived from many manifestations of his mind and heart, that had he lived today he would have been ideally fitted to practice medicine.

What man of scientific training could write a more accurate and succinct report of a case than the following?

Two days ago I saw a child, that two men and a nurse, who said themselves to be the

[1] When La Boétie was taken ill, Montaigne urged his removal from Bordeaux partly because of the danger of plague; "besides I had formerly myself found benefit in such a distemper as his from riding on horseback." Montaigne: *Letters.*

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father, the uncle, and the aunt of it, carried about to get money by showing it, by reason it was so strange a creature. It was, as to all the rest, of a common form, and could stand upon its feet, could go and gabble much like other children of the same age; it had never as yet taken any other nourishment but from the nurse's breasts, and what, in my presence, they tried to put into the mouth of it, it only chewed a little, and spit it out again without swallowing; the cry of it seemed indeed a little odd and particular, and it was just fourteen months old. Under the breast it was joined to another child, but without a head, and that had the spine of the back without motion, the rest entire; for though it had one arm shorter than the other, it had been broken by accident at their birth; they were joined breast to breast, and as if a lesser child would reach the arms about the neck of one something bigger. The juncture and thickness of the place where they were conjoined, was not above four fingers, or thereabouts, so that if you thrust up the imperfect child, you may see the navel of the other below it, and the joining was betwixt the paps and the navel. The navel of the imperfect child could not be seen, but all the rest of the belly; so that all the rest that was not joined of the imperfect one, as arms, buttocks, thighs, and legs, hung dangling upon the other, and might reach to

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the midleg. The nurse moreover told us that it urined at both bodies, and also the members of the other were nourished, sensibly, and in the same plight with that she gave suck to, excepting that they were shorter, and less. (Of a Monstrous Child.)

He sounds like a doctor when he says:

It is probable that the chief credit of miracles, of visions, and spells, and such abnormal effects, hath its source in the power of imagination, acting principally upon the minds of the vulgar, the which are softer than others. Their belief has been so strongly got hold of, that they think they see what they do not see. (Of the Force of Imaginatian.)

He realizes the power of the imagination even to kill.

A woman fancying she had swallowed a piece of bread, cried out of an intolerable pain in her throat, where she thought she felt it stick: but an ingenious fellow that was brought to her, seeing no outward tumor nor alteration, supposing it only to be conceit taken at some crust of bread that had hurt her as it went down, caused her to vomit, and cunningly, unseen, threw a crooked pin into the basin, which the woman no sooner saw, but believing she had cast it up, she presently found herself eased of

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her pain. I myself knew a gentleman, who having treated a great deal of good company at his house, three or four days after bragged in jest (for there was no such thing) that he had made them eat of a baked cat; at which, a young gentlewoman, who had been at the feast, took such a horror, that falling into a violent vomiting and a fever, there was no possible means to save her. Even brute beasts are also subject to the force of imagination as well as we; as is seen by dogs, who die of grief for the loss of their masters, and are seen to quest, tremble, and start, as horses will kick and whinny in their sleep. Now all this may be attributed to the affinity and relation betwixt the souls and bodies of brutes, but 'tis quite another thing when the imagination works upon the souls of rational men, and not only to the prejudice of their own particular bodies, but of others also. (Of the Force of Imagination.)

He had the physician's contempt for lack of self-control and notes oddities of behavior due to it, to subtle physical instincts or to high-strung nerves.

Who would be astonished at so strange a constitution as that of Demophon, steward to Alexander the Great, who sweat in the shade,

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and shivered in the sun? I have seen those who have run from the smell of a mellow apple with greater precipitation than from a harquebuse shot; others run away from a mouse, others vomit at the sight of cream; others ready to swoon at the sight of a cat, as Germanicus, who could neither endure the sight nor the crowing of a cock. I will not deny, but that there may peradventure be some occult cause and natural aversion in these cases; but certainly a man might conquer it, if he took it in time. Precept has in this wrought so effectually upon me, though not without some endeavor on my part. Young bodies are supple, one should therefore in that age bend and ply them to all fashions and customs. (Education of Children.)

Smiths, millers, pewterers, forgemen, and armorers, could never be able to live in the perpetual noise of their own trades, did it strike their ears with the same violence that it does ours. My perfumed doublet gratifies my own smelling at first, as well as that of others; but after I have worn it three or four days together, I no more perceive it, but it is yet more strange, that custom, notwithstanding the long intermissions and intervals, should yet have the power to unite, and establish the effect of its impressions upon our senses, as is manifest in such as live near unto steeples, and the frequent noise of the bells. I myself lie at home

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in a tower, where every morning and evening a very great bell rings out the Ave Maria, the noise of which shakes my very tower, and at first seemed insupportable to me; but having now a good while kept that lodging, I am so used to it that I hear it without any manner of offense, and often without awaking at it. (Of Custom.)

I saw the other day, at my own house, a little fellow who came to show himself for money, a native of Nantes born without arms, who has so well taught his feet to perform the services his hands should have done him, that indeed they have half forgot their natural office, and the use for which they were designed; the fellow too calls them his hands, and we may allow him so to do, for with them he cuts anything, charges and discharges a pistol, threads a needle, sews, writes, and puts off his hat, combs his head, plays at cards and dice, and all this with as much dexterity as any other could do who had more, and more proper limbs to assist him; and the money I gave him he carried away in his foot, as we do in our hand. (Of Custom.)

Physicians hold, that there are certain complexions that are agitated by the same sounds and instruments, even to fury. I have seen some, who could not hear a bone gnawed under the table without impatience; and there is scarce any man, who is not disturbed at the

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sharp and shrill noise that the file makes in grating upon the iron; as also to hear chewing near them, or to hear any one speak, who has an impediment in the throat or nose, will move some people even to anger and hatred. (The Apology.)

On the other hand the spirit reacts on the body:

To a discontented and afflicted man, the light of the day seems dark and overcast. Our senses are not only depraved, but very often stupefied by the passions of the soul. How many things do we see, that we do not take notice of, if the mind be taken up with other thoughts?. . . It appears that the soul retires within, and amuses the power of the senses. And so both the inside, and the outside of man is full of infirmities and mistakes. They who have compared our lives to a dream, were peradventure more in the right than they were aware of; when we dream, the soul lives, works, and exercises all its faculties, neither more nor less, than when awake; but more largely and obscurely; yet not so much neither, that the difference should be as great as betwixt night and the meridional brightness of the sun, but as betwixt night and shade; there she sleeps, here she slumbers; but whether more or less, 'tis still dark and Cymmerian darkness. We

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wake sleeping, and sleep waking. I do not see so clearly in my sleep; but as to my being awake, I never found it clear enough, and free from clouds. Moreover, sleep, when it is profound, sometimes rocks even dreams themselves asleep, but our awaking is never so spritely, that it does rightly, and as it should, purge and dissipate those ravings and whimsies, which are waking dreams, and worse than dreams. Our reason and soul receiving those fancies and opinions that like come in dreams, and authorizing the actions of our dreams, with the approbation that they do those of the day; wherefore do we not doubt, whether our thought and action is another sort of dreaming, and our waking a certain kind of sleep? (The Apology.)

In his graphic description, too long for citation here, of a severe fall from his horse that caused him to vomit blood and be out of his senses, he carefully analyzes everything; automatic and involuntary movements; the distinction between molecular and somatic death; partial return to consciousness with its vague, delightful unreality; instinctive acts; the existence of a subconscious ego. From the memory of the episode he argues that death, to which he had come near, may be very far from

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the horrible experience to the victim of it that the alarmed and sorrowing witnesses imagine.

My stomach was so oppressed with the coagulated blood, that my hands moved to that part of their own voluntary motion, as they frequently do to the part that itches, without being directed by our will. There are several animals and even men, in whom one may perceive the muscles to stir and tremble after they are dead. Having been by the way, and two long hours after, given over for a dead man, I began to move and to fetch my breath; for so great abundance of blood was falling into my stomach, that nature had need to rouse her forces to discharge it. They then raised me upon my feet, where I threw off a great quantity of pure florid blood, as I had also done several times by the way, which gave me so much ease, that I began to recover a little life, but so leisurely and by so small advances, that my first sentiments were much nearer the approaches of death than life. The remembrance of this accident, which is very well imprinted in my memory, so naturally representing to me the image and idea of death, has in some sort reconciled me to that untoward accident. When I first began to open my eyes after my trance, it was with so perplexed, so weak and

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dead a sight, that I could yet distinguish nothing, and could only discern the light. As to the functions of the soul, they advanced with the same pace and measure with those of the body. I saw myself all bloody, my doublet being stained and spotted all over with the blood I had vomited; and the first thought that came into my mind, was, that I had a harquebuse shot in my head; and indeed at the same time, there were a great many fired round about us. Methought, my life but just hung upon my lips, and I shut my eyes, to help, methought, to thrust it out; and took a pleasure in languishing and letting myself go. It was an imagination that only superficially floated upon my soul, as tender and weak as all the rest, but really, not only exempt from pain, but mixed with that sweetness and pleasure that people are sensible of, when they indulge themselves to drop into a slumber. I believe it is the very same condition those people are in, whom we see to swoon with weakness, in the agony of death, and am of opinion that we lament them without cause, supposing them agitated with grievous dolours, or that their souls suffer under painful thoughts. . . . So it happens that in the yawning of sleep, before it has fully possessed us to perceive, as in a dream, what is done about us, and to follow the last things are said with a perplexed and uncertain hearing, which seem but to

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touch upon the borders of the soul; and make answers to the last words have been spoken to us, which have more in them of fortune than sense. Now seeing I have effectually tried it, I make no doubt but I have hitherto made a right judgment. For first being in a swoon, I labored with both hands to rip open the buttons of my doublet, (for I was without arms) and yet I felt nothing in my imagination that hurt me; for we have many motions in us, that do not proceed from our direction. . . . As I drew near my own house, where the alarm of my fall was already got before me, and that my family were come out to meet me, with the hubbub usual in such cases; I did not only make some little answer to some questions were asked me, but they moreover tell me, that I had so much sense about me as to order them to give a horse to my wife, who, I saw, was toiling and laboring along the road, which was a steep and uneasy one.[2] This consideration should seem to proceed from a soul, that retained its functions, but it was nothing so with me. I knew not what I said or did, and they were nothing but idle thoughts in the clouds, that were stirred up by the senses of the eyes and ears, and proceeded not from me. I knew not for all that, or whence I came, or whither I went, neither was I capable to weigh

[2] Cotton's translation as properly corrected by Hazlitt.

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and consider, what was said to me: these were light effects, that the senses produced of themselves, as of custom; what the soul contributed was in a dream, as being lightly touched, licked and bedewed by the soft impression of the senses. Notwithstanding, my condition was in truth very easy and quiet, I had no afflictions upon me, either for others or myself. It was an extreme drooping and weakness without any manner of pain. I saw my own house, but knew it not. When they had put me to bed, I found an inexpressible sweetness in that repose; for I had been damnably tugged and lugged by those poor people, who had taken the pains to carry me upon their arms a very great and a very ill way, and had in so doing all quite tired out themselves twice or thrice one after another. They offered me several remedies but I would take none, certainly believing that I was mortally wounded in the head. And in earnest, it had been a very happy death, for the weakness of my understanding, deprived me of the faculty of discerning, and that of my body from the sense of feeling. I suffered myself to glide away so sweetly, and after so soft and easy a manner, that I scarce find any other action less troublesome than that was. This long story, of so light an accident, would appear vain enough, were it not for the knowledge I have gained by it for my own use; for I do really find, that to be

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acquainted with death, is no more but nearly to approach it. (Use Makes Perfectness.)

Such as have been acquainted with these faintings, proceeding from weakness, do say that they are therein sensible of no manner of pain, but rather feel a kind of delight, as in a passage to sleep and rest. These are studied and digested deaths. (Of Judgment of the Death of Another.)

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE SENSES

He goes deeply into the question of the senses, affirming that we cannot deny the evidences they adduce of the reality of externals.

The senses are our proper and first judges, which perceive not things but by external accidents. (Of the Act of Conferring.)

There can be nothing absurd to a greater degree, than to maintain that fire does not warm, that light does not shine, and, that there is no weight nor solidity in iron, which are advertisements conveyed to us by the senses; neither is there belief nor knowledge in man, that can be compared to that for certainty. The first consideration I have upon the subject of the senses is, that I make a doubt whether or no man be furnished with all natural senses. I see several animals who live an entire and perfect life,

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some without sight, others without hearing: who knows whether to us also, one, two, or three, or many other senses may not be wanting? For if any one be wanting, our examination cannot discover the defect. 'Tis the privilege of the senses to be the utmost limit of our discovery: there is nothing beyond them that can assist us in exploration, not so much as one sense in the discovery of another. . . . It is impossible to make a man naturally blind, conceive that he does not see, impossible to make him desire sight, or to be sensible of his defect. (The Apology.)

He raises the question whether animals may not be possessed of senses we lack.

What do we know but that the difficulties which we find in several effects of animals which exceed our capacity, are not produced by faculty of some sense that we are defective in? And whether some of them have not by this means a life more full and entire than ours? We seize an apple as it were with all our senses: we there find redness, smoothness, odor, and sweetness? But it may have other virtues besides these, as to heat, or bind, which no sense of ours can have any reference unto. Is it not likely that there are sensitive faculties in nature that are fit to judge of, and to discern those which we call the occult properties

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in several things, as for the loadstone to attract iron; and that the want of such faculties is the cause that we are ignorant of the true essence of such things? 'Tis peradventure some particular sense that gives cocks to understand what hour it is of midnight, and when it grows to be towards day, and that makes them to crow accordingly; that teaches chickens, before they have any experience of what they are, to fear a spar-hawk, and not a goose, or a peacock, though birds of a much larger size; that cautions them of the hostile quality the cat has against them, and makes them not to fear a dog? To arm themselves against the mewing (a kind of flattering voice) of the one, and not against the barking, a shrill and threatening voice of the other. That teaches wasps, ants, and rats, to fall upon the best pear, and the best cheese, before they have tasted them, and inspires the stag, elephant, and serpents, with the knowledge of a certain herb proper for their cure. There is no sense that has not a mighty dominion, and that does not by its power introduce an infinite number of knowledges. If we were defective in the intelligence of sounds of music, and of the voice, it would cause an inimaginable confusion in all the rest of our science. For, besides what appertains to the proper effect of every sense, how many arguments, consequences, and conclusions do we draw

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to other things, by comparing one sense with another? Let an understanding man imagine human nature originally produced without the sense of seeing, and consider what ignorance and trouble such a defect would bring upon him, what a darkness and blindness in the soul; he will then see by that, of how great importance to the knowledge of truth, the privation of such another sense, or of two or three, should we be so deprived, would be. We have formed a truth by the consultation and concurrence of our five senses, but peradventure, we should have the consent and contribution of eight or ten, to make a certain discovery of our own being. The sects that controvert the knowledge of man, do it principally by the incertainty and weakness of our senses.[3] For since all knowledge is by their means and mediation conveyed unto us, if they fail in their report, if they corrupt, or alter what they bring us from without, if the light which by them creeps into the soul be

[3] At a period when . . . the mind still trembled before the authority of the Church . . . no wonder that even Montaigne, who did so much for his age, should have hesitated respecting the capacity of men to work out for themselves great truths; and that pausing in the course that lay before him, his scepticism should often have assumed the form of a distrust of the human faculties. BUCKLE: *History of Civilization in England.*

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obscured in the passage, we have nothing else to hold by. (The Apology.)

Despite his fear of the doctors he would have made a poor Christian Scientist.

Like a musket-bullet, under the forefinger, the middle finger being lapped over it, which feels so like two, that a man will have much ado to persuade himself there is but one; the end of the two fingers feeling each of them one at the same time. For that the senses are very often masters of our reason, and constrain it to receive impressions which it judges and knows to be false, is frequently seen. I set aside the sense of feeling, that has its functions nearer, more lively and substantial; that so often by the effect of the pains it helps the body to subvert and overthrows all those fine stoical resolutions, and compels him to cry out of his belly, who has resolutely established this doctrine in his soul, that the colic, and all other pains and diseases are indifferent things; not having the power to abate anything of the sovereign felicity, wherein the wise man is seated by his virtue. (The Apology.)

Objective realities exist. There are qualities inherent in matter whether we perceive them or not.

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For, it is not said, that the essence of things have a relation to man only; hardness, whiteness, depth and sharpness, have reference to the service and knowledge of animals as well as to us; and nature has equally designed them for their use. When we press down the eye, the body that we look upon, we perceive to be longer, and more extended; many beasts have their eyes so pressed down: this length therefore is peradventure the true form of that body, and not that which our eyes give it in the usual state. If we close the lower part of the eye, things appear double to us. If our ears be hindered, or the passage stopped with anything, we receive the sound quite otherwise, than we usually do; the animals likewise, who have either the ears hairy, or but a very little hole instead of an ear, do not consequently hear as we do; but another kind of sound. We see at festivals and theaters, the opposing a painted glass of a certain color to the light of the flambeaus, all things in the room appear to us green, yellow or violet. . . . 'Tis likely that the eyes of animals, which we see to be of divers colors, do produce the appearance of bodies the same with their eyes. We should therefore, to make a right judgment of the operations of the senses, be first agreed with beasts, and secondly, amongst ourselves, which we by no means are, but enter at every turn into dispute;

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forasmuch as one hears, sees, or tastes something otherwise than another does, and contests as much as upon any other thing, of the diversity of the images that the senses represent to us. A child, by the ordinary rule of nature, hears, sees and tastes otherwise than a man of thirty years old, and he, than one of three-score. The senses are in some more obscure and dusky, and more open and quick in others; and we receive things variously according as we are, and accordingly as they appear to us. Now our perception being so uncertain and contraverted, it is no more a wonder if we are told that we may declare that snow appears white to us, but that to affirm that it is in its own essence really so, is more than we are able to justify: and this foundation being shaken, all the knowledge in the world must of necessity fall to ruin. What, do our senses themselves hinder one another? A picture seems raised and embossed to the sight, in the handling it seems flat to the touch: shall we say that musk, which delights the smell, and is offensive to the taste, is agreeable or no? There are herbs and unguents, proper for one part of the body, that are hurtful to another: honey is pleasant to the taste, but offensive to the sight. As we see in the bread we eat, it is nothing but bread, but by being eaten, it becomes bones, blood, flesh, hair and nails. . . . The humidity sucked up by the

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root of a tree becomes trunk, leaf and fruit; and the air being but one, is modulated in a trumpet to a thousand sorts of sounds. Are they our senses, I would fain know, that in like manner form these subjects into so many divers qualities, or have they them really such in themselves? And upon this doubt, what can we determine of their true essence? Moreover, since the accidents of diseases, of raving, or sleep, make things appear otherwise to us than they do to the healthful, the wise, and those that are awake; is it not likely, that our right posture of health and understanding, and our natural humours, have also wherewith to give a being to things that have relation to their own condition, and accommodate them to themselves, as well as when they are disordered; and our health as capable of giving them an aspect as sickness? Why has not the temperate a certain form of objects relative to it as well as the intemperate: and why may it not as well stamp it with its own character as the other? He whose mouth is out of taste, says the wine is flat, the healthful man commends its flavor, and the thirsty its briskness. Now our condition always accommodating things to itself, and transforming them according to its own posture, we cannot know what things truly are in themselves, being that nothing comes to us but what is falsified and altered by the senses.

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Where the compass, the square, and the rule are crooked, all propositions drawn from thence, and all building erected by those guides, must of necessity be also defective. The uncertainty of our senses renders everything uncertain that they produce. (The Apology.)

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CHAPTER IV

Prejudice Against Physicians

Like his father, Montaigne professed a horror of doctors. This was strengthened perhaps by a conviction that his friend La Boétie might have recovered but for the ill-advised ministrations of his physician, and in one of his last essays he indulges in a diatribe against the faculty which we may all read with profit. But what he confessed and what he professed sometimes showed a certain lack of harmony in line with the many apparent contradictions of his character. Looking below the surface we find that Montaigne saw the foibles of the doctors of his day, had the intelligence to appreciate the mistakes they made but was not carried away by prejudice.

We repute physicians fortunate when they hit upon a lucky cure, as if there were no other art but theirs that could not stand upon its own legs, and whose foundations are too weak to support itself upon its own basis, and as if no other art stood in need of fortune's hand to assist in its operations. For my part, I think of

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physic as much good or ill as anyone would have me; for, thanks be to God, we have no great traffic together. I am of a quite contrary humour to other men, for I always despise it; but when I am sick, instead of recanting, or entering into composition with it, I begin yet more to hate, nauseate, and fear it, telling them who importune me to enter into a course of physic, that they must give me time to recover my strength and health, that I may be the better able to support and encounter the violence and danger of the potion[1]: so that I still let nature work, supposing her to be sufficiently armed with teeth and claws to defend herself from the assaults of infirmity, and to uphold that contexture, the dissolution of which she flies and abhors: for I am afraid, lest instead of assisting her when grappled, and struggling, with the disease, I should assist her adversary, and procure new work, and new accidents to encounter. (Various Events, etc.)

He was really a friend of medicine and believed in the healing art, though he says, with his usual outspoken and unassuming frankness, that the doctors had done him

[1] I firmly believe that if the whole *materia medica* could be sunk to the bottom of the sea, it would be all the better for mankind and all the worse for the fishes. O. W. Holmes.

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no good. His pages reflect a terrible but true picture of the state of medicine in his day[2] and when we realize that his excruciating pain was unrelieved, that he suffered from a complaint that we cannot heal today with all our science, we must credit Montaigne with unusual fairness to see any good in us or our calling. Though he professed to repudiate us utterly still he did not do so. Little as he expected from them, he called in the doctors.

His writings abound with illustrations drawn from anatomy, physiology and pathology and he loved to express his ideas by references to the body:

Force and nerves cannot be borrowed; you can only borrow cloaks and furbelows. . . Those who have a thin body, stuff it out with padding; those who have thin subject-matter swell it out with words. (Education of Children.)

For tender stomachs there is need of artificial ordinances and constraint; good stomachs simply make use of the ordinances prescribed by natural appetites. (Of Vanity.)

[2] The atrocities committed in the name of medicine are amusingly, graphically and correctly set forth in Le Sage's "Gil Blas," which, though published in the eighteenth century, applies to earlier conditions.

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Intemperance is the pestilence which killeth pleasure, and temperance is not the flail of pleasure, it is the seasoning thereof. (Of Experience.)

And as we see women that without the knowledge of men do sometimes of themselves bring forth inanimate and formless lumps of flesh, but that to cause a natural and perfect generation they are to be husbanded with another kind of seed. (Of Idleness.)

A physician takes no pleasure in the health even of his friends, says the ancient comical Greek, nor a soldier in the peace of his country; and so of the rest. And, which is yet worse, let every one but dive into his own bosom, and he will find his private wishes spring and his sacred hopes grow up at another's expense. (Profit of One Man is the Inconvenience of Another.)

'Tis a sign of crudity and indigestion to vomit up what we eat in the same condition it was swallowed down, and the stomach has not performed its office, unless it has altered the form and condition of what was committed to it to concoct. (Education of Children.)

And as they say, that in our bodies there is a congregation of divers humors, of which, that is the sovereign, which according to the complexion we are of, is commonly most predominant in us; so, though the soil have in it divers

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motions to give it agitation; yet must there of necessity be one to over-rule all the rest. (Cato the Younger.)

Do fevers, gouts and apoplexies, spare them any more, than one of us? When old age hangs heavy upon a prince's shoulders, can the yeomen of his guard[3] ease him of the burden? When he is astonished with the apprehension of death, can the gentlemen of his bed-chamber comfort and assure him? When jealousy, or any other capricio swims in his brain, can our complements and ceremonies restore him to his good humour? The canopy embroidered with pearl and gold, he lies under, has no virtue against a violent fit of the stone or colic. . . .He is a sot, his taste is palled and flat; he no more enjoys what he has, than one that has a cold relishes the flavour of canary; or than a horse is sensible of his rich caparison. (Of the In-, equality Amongst Us.)

Could virtue itself put on flesh and blood,

[3] La mort a des rigueurs ā nulle autre pareilles.
On a beau la prier,
La cruelle qu'elle est se bouche les oreilles
Et nous laisse crier.
Le pauvre en sa cabane ou le chaume le couvre
Est sujet ā ses lois;
Et la garde qui veille aux barrières du Louvre
N'en defend point nos rois. F. MALHERBE (1555–1628).

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I believe the pulse would beat faster going on to an assault, than in going to dinner: that is to say, there is a necessity she should beat, and be moved upon this account. I have taken notice, as of an extra-ordinary thing of some great men, who in the highest enterprises, and greatest dangers, have detained themselves in so settled and serene a calm, as not at all to hinder their usual gayety, or break their sleep. (Of Sleep.)

So falling people extend their arms before them by a natural impulse, which prompts them to offices and motions, without any commission from us. (Use Makes Perfectness.)

I would as willingly lend a man my blood, as my pains. (Of Presumption.)

The diseases of the body explain themselves in increasing. We find that to be the gout, which we called a rheumatism or a strain. The diseases of the soul, the greater they are, keep themselves the more obscure; and the most sick are the least sensible. Therefore it is that with an unrelenting hand, they must often in the day be taken to task, opened and torn from the hollow of the heart. (Upon Some Verses of Virgil.)

These continual tricking drops make ulcers in me. . . .The Chirurgion's end is not only to eat away the dead flesh, that is but the progress of his cure, he has a care over and

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above to fill up the wound with better and more natural flesh, and restore the member to its due estate. Whoever only proposes to himself to remove that which offends him, falls short, for good does not necessarily succeed evils; another evil may succeed and a worse. . . . Who knows but that God will have it happen, as it does in human bodies, that purge and restore themselves to a better estate by long and grievous maladies; which restores them a more entire and perfect health than that they took from them? (Of Vanity.)

I fancy that those features and moulds of a face, and those lineaments by which men guess at our internal complexions, and our fortunes to come, is a thing that does not very directly and simply lie under the chapter of beauty and deformity, no more than every good odor and serenity of air promises health, nor all fog and stink, infection and a time of pestilence. Such as accuse ladies of contradicting their beauty by their manners, do not always hit right; for, in a face which is none of the best, there may lie some air of probity and trust: as, on the contrary, I have seen betwixt two beautiful eyes, menaces of a dangerous and malignant nature. There are some physiognomies that are favorable, so that in a crowd of victorious enemies, you shall presently choose, amongst men you never saw before, one rather than another,

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to whom to surrender, and with whom to intrust your life, and yet not properly upon the consideration of beauty. (Of Physiognomy.)

Speaking of the propriety of referring a matter to the person proficient in it he says of physicians: "I upon that account the rather incline to credit what they report of the temperature of the air, of the health and complexions of princes, of wounds and diseases." (A Proceeding of Some Ambassadors.)

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CHAPTER V

Montaigne's Views On His Own Ailments

In his essay on "The Resemblance of Children to their Fathers," Montaigne laments that he was afflicted with the particular disease that attacked him towards middle life. How human! We always think we would be better off with a different malady—that an injured foot would hurt less than a hand or vice versa according to which it is. "I am grown older by seven or eight years since I began [writing], neither has it been without some new acquisition. I have in that time been acquainted with the stone. Age could not possibly have laid upon me a disease for which, even from my infancy, I have had so great a horror and it is in truth of all the accidents of old age that of which I have ever been most afraid." His father, towards the close of a long and active life, was a prey to the same malady and this perhaps accounts in part for his horror of it, an

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almost superstitious dread of the gout being over him like a cloud.

Mothers have reason to rebuke their children when they counterfeit having but one eye, squinting, lameness, or any other personal defect; for besides that their bodies being then so tender may be subject to take an ill bent, fortune, I know not how, sometimes seems to delight in taking us at our word; and I have heard several examples related of people who have become really sick by only feigning to be so. I have always used, whether on horseback, or on foot, to carry a stick in my hand, and so as to affect doing it with a grace. Many have threatened that this wantonness would one day be turned into necessity, that is, that I should be the first of my family that should have the gout. (Not to Counterfeit Being Sick.)

A more potent factor doubtless, in his dislike to the so-called healing art, was the full knowledge and appreciation of the barbarities of the "cutters" of the day, of the ignorant and violent methods they used for their cures, of the character of so-called surgery. Here is the true philosopher speaking. "Yet in eighteen months time or thereabout that I have been in this uneasy condition I have so inured myself to it as to be

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content to live in it and have found wherein to comfort myself and to hope."

He says of the stone: "I am in conflict with the worst, the most sudden, the most painful, the most mortal and the most irremediable of all diseases," but he opines that even this dread malady "is very well to be endured by a man who has his soul free from the fear of death, and the menaces, conclusions and consequences which physic is ever thundering in our ears." He trusts that the affliction of stone will overcome whatever in him still revolts at the thought of death and conquer his fear thereof, hoping at the same time that God will save him from going to the other extreme of desiring and wishing to die should the sharpness of his torture in the end prove greater than he can bear.

He thinks that external fortitude which subdues all expressions of suffering not an indispensable thing if the soul is indomitable. "'Tis no great matter what faces we cut if we find any ease by it . . . if agitation eases him let him tumble and toss at pleasure; if he finds the disease evaporate (as some physicians hold that it helps women in delivery) extremely to cry out or if it do but amuse his torments, let him roar aloud."

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It is not to be wondered at that, as a great sufferer and one who steeped in classic lore had the example of the ancients before him, he should have considered suicide. He reviews the subject pro and con and his final conclusion is heroic, beautiful.

Pliny says, there are three sorts of diseases, to escape any of which a man has a good title to destroy himself; the worst of which is the stone in the bladder, when the urine is suppressed. . . For a desperate disease a desperate cure. . . The stoicks say, that it is living according to nature in a wise man to take his leave of life even in the height of prosperity, if he do it opportunely, and in a fool to prolong it, though he be miserable, provided he be indigent of those things, which are reputed the necessaries of human life. As I do not offend the law provided against thieves, when I embezzle my own money, and cut my own purse, nor that against incendiaries, when I burn my own wood; so am I not under the lash of those made against murderers, for having deprived myself of my own life. Hegesius said, that as the condition of life did, so the condition of death ought to depend upon our own choice; and Diogenes meeting the philosopher Speusippus, so blown up with an inveterate dropsy that he was fain to be carried in a litter, and by him saluted with

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the compliment of, I wish you good health; no health to thee, replied the other, who art content to live in such a condition. And in truth, not long after, Speusippus weary of so languishing an estate of life, found a means to die. But this does not pass without admitting a dispute: for many are of opinion, that we cannot quit this garrison of the world, without the express command of him, who has placed us in it: and that it appertains to God, who has placed us here, not for ourselves only, but for his glory, and the service of others, to dismiss us when it shall best please him, and not for us to depart without his license: but we are not born for ourselves only, but for our country also, the laws of which require an account from us, upon the score of their own interest, and have an action of man-slaughter good against us. Or if these fail to take cognizance of the fact, we are punished in the other world, as deserters of our duty. There is more constancy in suffering the chain we are tied in, than in breaking it. . . .No accidents can make true virtue turn her back. (The Custom of the Isle of Cea.)

In analyzing pain and pleasure he says:

Philosophy, when she has said all she can refers us, at last, to the example of a wrestler, or a muleteer, in which sort of people we com-

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monly observe much less apprehension of death, sense of pain, and other infirmities, and more constancy, than ever knowledge furnished any one withal, that was born without those infirmities, and of himself prepared by a natural habit. . . . When real infirmities fail us, knowledge lends us hers: that color, that complexion, portend some defluxion: this hot season threatens us with a fever: this breach in the life-line of your left hand, gives you notice of some near and dangerous indisposition, and at last, roundly attacks health itself; saying this spriteliness and vigor of youth, cannot continue in this posture, there must be blood taken, and the heat abated, let it run to your prejudice. Compare the life of a man subjected to such imaginations, to that of a laborer that suffers himself to be led by his natural appetite, measuring things only by the present sense, without knowledge, and without prognostic, that feels no pain or sickness, but when he is really tormented or sick: whereas the other has the stone in his soul, before he has it either in his reins or bladder: as if it were not time enough to suffer the evil when it shall come he must anticipate it by fancy, and run to meet it. What I say of physic, may generally serve in example for all other sciences: from thence is derived that ancient opinion of philosophers, that placed the sovereign good, in the discovery

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of the weakness of our judgment. My ignorance affords me as much occasion of hope, as of fear: and having no other rule for my health, than that of the examples of others, and of events I see elsewhere upon the like occasion: I find of all sorts, and rely upon those which by comparison are most favorable to me. I receive health with open arms, free, full and entire, and by so much it is at present less ordinary, and more rare: so far am I from troubling its repose and sweetness, with the bitterness of a new and constrained manner of living. . . .Would you have a man sound, would you have him regular, and in a steady and secure posture? Muffle him up in the shades of stupidity and sloth.[1] We must be made beasts to be made wise, and hoodwinked before we are fit to be led. And if one shall tell me that the advantage of having a cold and stupid sense of pain and other evils, brings this disadvantage along with it, to render us consequently less sensible also in the fruition of good and pleasure; this is true; but the misery of our condition is such, that we have not so much to enjoy, as to avoid, and that the extremest pleasure does not affect us to the degree that a light grief does. . . .I do not approve such an insensibility, as is neither possible, nor to be desired. I am very well content not to be sick: but if I am, I would

[1] 1 *Corinthians* 1. 27–28.

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know that I am so; and if a caustic be applied or incisions made in any part, I would feel them. In truth, whoever would take away the knowledge and sense of evil, would at the same time eradicate the sense of pleasure, and finally annihilate man himself. (The Apology.)

For himself, Montaigne, though confessing to an occasional "peevishness and crabbed humor" in a very sharp fit, has never arrived at "such a degree of despair as to bellow and make uproar." He was never beside himself with pain to the extent of not being able "to speak, think and give a rational answer as well as at any other time" but he could not do so as coldly and indifferently as when free from pain. "In the intervals from excessive torment when my ureters only languish without any great dolor I presently, feel myself in my wonted state."

Speaking of colic: "It begins with me after a more sharp and severe manner than it uses to do with other men. My fits come so thick upon me that I am scarcely ever at ease" and he adds that he is better off than a thousand others who have no fever, no other disease but what they create for themselves for want of meditation. His

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description of the impaction and descent of a stone is classic. "Thou art seen to sweat with pain, to look pale and red, to tremble, to vomit well-nigh to blood, to suffer strange contortions and convulsions, by starts to let tears drop from thine eyes, to urine thick, black, and frightful water, or to have it suppressed by some sharp and craggy stone, that cruelly pricks and tears thee."

Montaigne believed that he derived his trouble from his father but does not understand how it was transmitted.

He died wonderfully tormented with a great stone in his bladder. He was never sensible of his disease till the 67th year of his age and before that had never felt any grudging or symptoms of it either in his loins, sides or any other part and had lived till then in a happy vigorous state of health. . .he continued seven years after in this disease and died a very painful death. . I was born twenty-five years before his disease seized him and in the time of his most flourishing and healthful state of body, his third child in order of birth; where could his propensity to this malady lurk all that while. . .and how so concealed that till five and forty years after I did not begin to be sensible of it? . . .What

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a wonderful thing it is that the drop of seed from which we are produced should carry in itself the impressions, not only of the bodily form, but even of the thoughts and inclinations of our fathers. (Resemblance of Children to their Fathers.)

PRESERVATION OF HEALTH

Montaigne was a great believer in the cult of health, in that preventive medicine not yet crystallized into a branch of the art but dimly apprehended through the ages. "Tis no time to bathe and clean a man's self when he is seized on by a violent fever . . . I am more solicitous to improve my health when I am well, than to restore it when I am sick." (Of Vanity.)

His ideas about the insanitary pocket-handkerchief must often have occurred to many of us but civilization increasingly imposes obligations distasteful or harmful to the individual in the interests of the community.

A French gentleman, of my acquaintance, was always wont to blow his nose with his fingers (a thing very much against our fashion) would justify himself for so doing and was a man very famous for pleasant repartees, who, upon that occasion, asked me what privilege this filthy

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excrement had, that we must carry about us a fine handkerchief to receive it, and which was more, afterwards to lap it carefully up, and carry it all day about in our pockets, which, he said, could not be much more nauseous and offensive, than to see it thrown away, as we did all other evacuations. I found that what he said was not altogether without reason, and by being frequently in his company, that slovenly action of his was at last grown familiar to me; which nevertheless we make a face at, when we hear it reported of another country. (Of Custom.)

Montaigne attached importance to odors.

But the ordinary constitution of human bodies is quite otherwise, and their best and chiefest excellence, is to be exempt from smells; nay, the sweetness even of the purest breaths, has nothing in it of greater perfection, than to be without any offensive smell, but those of healthful children. And such as make use of these exotic perfumes, are with good reason to be suspected of some natural imperfection, which they endeavor by these odors to conceal.[2] (Of Smells.)

[2] Plutarch, Montaigne's favorite source of historical data, says that the perspiration of Alexander the Great had an agreeable odor.

I cannot talk with civet in the room,
A fine puss gentleman that's all perfume.
COWPER.

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Physicians might (I believe), if they would, extract greater utility from odors, than they do; for I have often observed, that they cause an alteration in me, and work upon my spirits according to their several virtues; which make me approve of what I said, namely, that the use of incense and perfumes in churches, so ancient and so universally received in all nations, and religions, was intended to cheer us, and to rouse and purify the senses, the better to fit us for contemplation. (Of Smells.)

He was himself peculiarly susceptible to their influence.

'Tis not to be believed, how strangely all sorts of odors cleave to me, and how apt my skin is to imbibe them. He that complains of nature, that she has not furnished mankind with a vehicle to convey smells to the nose, had no reason; for they will do it themselves; especially to me: my very mustachio's perform that office; for if I stroke them but with my gloves, or handkerchief, the smell will not out a whole day: they will reproach me where I have been. (Of Smells.)

He went far ahead of Osler in discrediting the performance of the aged.

Of all great human actions I ever heard, or read of, of what sort soever, I have observed,

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both in former ages, and our own, more performed before the age of thirty, than after: and oft-times in the very lives of the same men.

Sometimes the body first submits to age, sometimes the soul, and I have seen enow, who have got a weakness in their brains, before either in their hams, or stomach: and by how much the more it is a disease of no great pain to the infected party, and of obscure symptoms, so much greater the danger is. (Of Age.)

He was an apostle worthy to be classed with the Venetian nobleman Cornaro, [3]who began to reform his ways at forty and was rewarded with more than half a century of health and happiness thereafter.

Health is a precious thing and the only one, in truth, meriting that a man should lay out, not only his time, sweat, labour and goods but

[3] Luigi Cornaro (1467–1566), a Venetian nobleman, published four editions of a work on "The Temperate Life." He had been subject to digestive disturbances and gout for fifteen years, when at forty he took to dieting and hygienic living. Until within a few years of his death at ninety-eight he was able to write for seven or eight hours a day, conversed with his friends, attended concerts, etc. His first book was written when he was eighty-three, the others when he was eighty-six, ninety-one and ninety-five. The later ones contain apologies for the juvenile crudities of the earlier compositions!

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FRATELLI ALINARI, FLORENCE, ITALY

Portrait of Luigi Cornaro by Titian, Pitti Gallery, Florence.

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also his life itself to obtain it forasmuch as without it life itself is injurious to us.

Health, I say, the fairest and richest present that nature can make us. (The Apology.)

For the greatest part of pleasures, (say they), wheedle and caress, only to strangle us, like those thieves the Egyptians called Philiste; and if the headache should come before drunkenness, we should have a care of drinking too much: but pleasure to deceive us, marches before, and conceals her train. Books are pleasant, but if by being over studious, we impair our health, and spoil our good humor, two of the best pieces we have, let us give it over; for I for my part am one of those who think, that no fruit derived from them, can recompence so great a loss. As men who feel themselves weakened by a long series of indisposition, give themselves up at last to the mercy of medicine, and submit to certain rules of living, which they are for the future never to transgress; so he who retires, weary of, and disgusted, with the common way of living, ought to model this new one he enters into, by the rules of reason, and to institute and establish it by premeditation, and after the best method he can contrive. (Of Solitude.)

My chiefest care in choosing my lodgings, is always to avoid a thick and foul air; and those beautiful cities of Venice and Paris, have very

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much lessened the kindness I had for them, the one by the offensive smell of her marshes, and the other of her dirt. (Of Smells).

Two centuries later Dickens, in a similar vein, has a fling at Cologne.

Montaigne recognizes the existence of remedies in nature.

I very well know there are some simples that moisten and others that dry, I experimentally know that radishes are windy and senna leaves purging . . . I very much honor that glorious name (physic) and the end it is studied for and what it promises to the service of mankind; but what it foists upon us I neither honor nor can esteem. In the first place experience makes me dread it; for amongst all my acquaintance, I see no race of people so soon sick and so long before they are well as those who take much physic.

Here follows the charge that physicians actually seek to corrupt health itself for fear men should at any time escape their authority. It is terrible but true. The doctor who calls bronchitis, "pneumonia," indigestion, an "ulcer of the stomach;" talks of warding off a disease or accident that

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would infallibly have supervened but for his timely presence, who tells a patient he was "threatened" with this or that awful disease, may not be as common today as he was in Montaigne's time but he is with us still.

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CHAPTER VI

Montaigne's Attitude Toward Medicine

Montaigne offers a historical retrospect to show how medicine was looked down on in Rome, adverts to strange practices among various races and concludes with caustic comment on the common practice of ordering violent purges. "I do not know whether such evacuations be so much to our advantage as they pretend . . . the violent gripings and contest between the drug and the disease is ever to our loss . . . Order a purge for your brain, it will then be much better employed than upon your stomach. Physicians ascribe all favorable results to what they ordered; the unfavorable ones are explained by frivolous and idle reasons"—an open window, sleeping on the left side or with the arms out of bed.

On suggestion and deception he has some apposite remarks. Physicians maintain that "the most inexpert, ignorant physician is more proper for a patient that has confidence in him than the most learned and experienced that he is not acquainted with.

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Nay even the very choice of most of their drugs is in some sort mysterious and divine." He cites articles of the prevalent pharmacopeia—the left foot of a tortoise, the urine of an elephant, the liver of a mole, etc., "and for us who have the stone (so scornfully they use us in our miseries) the excrement of rats beaten to powder and such like trash and fooleries which rather carry a face of magical enchantment than any solid science. I omit the odd number of their pills, the appointment of certain days, feasts of the year, the superstition of gathering simples at certain hours." . . . "Who ever saw one physician approve of another's prescription without taking something away or adding something to it?"

Montaigne knew his history of medicine and points out the mistakes of physicians, the discrepancies in their teachings from Hippocrates and Herophilus[1] to Argenterius[2]

[1] Herophilus, a brilliant anatomist of the Alexandrian period (fourth century A. D.) who divides with Erasistratus the honor of originating practical dissection of the human body. Herophilus described the duodenum, prostate gland, retina, vitreous, torcular, etc.

[2] Jean Argenterius, a Piedmontese physician of high character who had the boldness to challenge the authority of Galen. He died in 1572.

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and Paracelsus.[3] (The latter's dogmatism and conceit are known to Montaigne.) "The art of physic is not so resolved that we need be without authority for what we do; it changes according to the climates and the moons, according to Fernel and L'Escale."

Small seal used by Montaigne in personal correspondence and in communications to Henry IV.

Large official seal. The arms are: On a field azure, ten trefoils or, bearing a lion's paw of the same, armed gules, per fesse.

(Of Experience.) How often do we see physicians impute the death of their patients to one another. After a recent visitation of the plague which "swept away an

[3] Paracelsus, Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493–1541), a Swiss who attempted to revolutionize medicine and laid the foundation of chemical pharmacology and therapeutics. He had a brilliant mind but was coarse in character and a violent denunciator of his contemporaries.

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infinite number of men" the "most famous physician of all the country" published a book confessing that blood-letting in that disease was the cause of so many fatalities.

That the rational practice of medicine is no easy matter he readily concedes.

If we but consider the occasions upon which they usually ground the cause of our diseases, they are so light and nice that I thence conclude a very little error in the dispensation of their drugs may do a great deal of mischief. Now if the mistake of a physician be so dangerous we are but in a scurvy condition, for it is almost impossible but he must often fall into those mistakes: he had need of too many parts, considerations and circumstances rightly to level his design; he must know the sick person's complexion, his temperament, his humors, inclinations, actions, nay his very thoughts and imaginations. He must be assured of the externa circumstances, of the nature of the place, the quality of the air and season, the situation of the planets and their influences: he must know in the disease the causes, prognostic, affections and critical days; in the drugs, the weight, the power of working, the country, figures, age and dispensation and he must know how rightly to proportion and mix them together, to beget a just and perfect proposition,

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wherein if there be the least error, if amongst so many springs, there be but any one out of order, 'tis enough to destroy us. God knows of how great difficulty most of these things are to be understood. For (for example) how shall a physician find out the true sign of the disease, every disease being capable of an infinite number of indications? How many doubts and controversies have they amongst themselves upon the interpretation of urines? . . . In the disease I have had were there never so little difficulty in the case I have never found three of one opinion, which I instance because I love to introduce examples wherein I am myself concerned.

Montaigne now cites instances of mistaken diagnosis where operation or autopsy disclosed the error. One of these, "a bishop who was my particular good friend," was advised by Montaigne, on the statements of the attendants to undergo operation. "When he was dead and opened," the stone was not in the bladder but in the kidney. "They are least excusable for any error in this disease by reason that it is in some sort palpable: and 'tis by that that I conclude chirurgery to be much more certain by reason that it sees and feels what it does and so goes less upon conjecture whereas

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the physicians have no speculum matricis by which to discover our brains, lungs and liver." A further menace to the patient lies in the errors of the druggist. "And is not the danger still more when the making up of this medicine is intrusted to the skill and fidelity of another, to whose mercy we again abandon our lives?" He adverts now to the need of specialties. Our physicians "are not aware that he who provides for all, provides for nothing, and that the entire government of this Microcosm is more than they are able to undertake."

To sum up these quotations and other passages, we must conclude that Montaigne was far from entertaining an ignorant and superstitious prejudice against medicine and its professors. On the contrary he perhaps shows himself more enlightened, dispassionate, reasonable and philosophic in this connection than in any one of the countless subjects over which his tireless fancy roamed. Montaigne recognized, as few of our bitter and shallow critics do, the inherent difficulties of the art of healing, the vastness of the field, its seriousness, its dangers. He appreciated the confusion which constantly arises through a general

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similarity of manifestations in acute disorders; the need of precise methods of diagnosis; the importance of concrete physical findings. He admits that there are ponderable substances that produce definite reactions in the body and that they can be utilized for man's good. He perceives the way patients themselves contribute to debase the art by submitting to any and every measure that any person whatever may recommend in their "violent and indiscreet desire of a present cure." It is pure cowardice that makes "belief so pliable" and patients so acquiescent, the dupes of impostors, of any one that will promise a cure. He does not "much blame them for making their advantage of our folly, for most men do the same. Many callings, both of greater and less dignity than theirs, have no other foundation or support than public abuse." Apparently the sophistications and substitutions of the compounder, intermediary between physician and patient, are not unknown to Montaigne and he sees in their accidental or wilful errors a further ground for mistrusting the doctor.

Finally there is the fallibility of human

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experience and its evaluation. "And after the cure is performed how can he assure himself that it was not because the disease was arrived at its period or an effect of chance? Or the operation of something else that he had eaten, drunk or sucked. Or by virtue of his grandmother's prayers?" He realizes that a serious attempt to unravel the secrets of nature must inevitably be one of incredible difficulty. The subjects for investigation, the phenomena observed are so infinite in number that honest research exhausts itself before a sufficient number of experiments could be properly sorted, classified, recorded, interpreted and verified. There will be conflicting reports from honest students. There will be many just observations made by obscure men that will not come to light. Looking back on the history of medicine he finds but three instances of investigators attempting really scientific work.

It is from all this and not from the mistakes of his contemporaries and the foibles of human nature in patient and physician that Montaigne grows skeptical both regarding the existing possibility of successful healing and the future of medicine.

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Thus he has the wit to find a real ground for distrusting it and naturally enough he could not foresee how all the indispensable assets of genuine therapy would one day be realized in the host of laboratories where countless plodders are seeking the truth; in the practical study of disease in hospital and clinic. The microscope, the stethoscope, the thermometer, the *x*-ray, and innumerable mechanical devices of common use today were all unknown. The spirit of scientific research had not replaced speculation and metaphysics in a realm where action inspired by speculation was a constant menace to the confiding.

And in spite of all that reason told him on the one hand, Montaigne was still so human, so reasonable, so open to conviction that when he could no longer find solace from the knowledge he possessed about health and disease, he humbly submitted to the ministration of such physicians as he believed learned and eminent. He was too clear-headed, too fair, in spite of all his sweeping and just criticisms of the fraternity, to hold that there were not exceptional men and exceptional results. "I honor physicians not for necessity. . . but for

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themselves having known many very good men of that profession and most worthy to be believed." He does not attack them but their system, and what a wretched iron-bound, self-satisfied, arrogant, vaunting, ignorant and deadly system it was in his day! "When I am sick I send for them, if they be near, only to have their company and see them as others do." And he obeys their directions in so far as these harmonize with his comfort, his experience and his common sense.

I summon them when I am ill, if they happen to be there at the right moment. They may choose whether my soup shall be made of hotch-potch vegetables or of lettuces, they can order me white wine or claret; and so with all other things that are merely indifferent to my appetite. (Resemblance of Children to Parents.)

Montaigne frankly admits that he would not dare to make so bold with the mysteries of physic had he not the authority of Celsus[4]

[4] Aurelius Cornelius Celsus, a Roman aristocrat of the time of Tiberius, though not a physician, wrote a classic work on medicine which is one of the principal sources of our knowledge of the medicine of antiquity.

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and Pliny,[5] ascribing to the latter the acute observation that when physicians are at a loss what to do they send their patients "some to vows and miracles others to the hot baths and waters;" and one more device, says Montaigne, is "to send us to the better air of some other country."

[5] Pliny, "The Elder," the author of a voluminous "Natural History," was a sort of universal genius and for centuries the accepted authority on botany. He was a bitter satirist of physicians. He was admiral of the Roman fleet in Neapolitan waters at the time of the eruption of Vesuvius which destroyed Pompeii, 79 A.D., and lost his life in attempting to rejoin his ship after dining ashore.

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CHAPTER VII

Montaigne as a Patient

The more we penetrate to Montaigne's inmost spirit the more we feel that, were he with us today, he would make an ideal patient. His common sense, his patience, his fortitude, his liberality, his keen perceptions, his discrimination, his knowledge of human nature and above all his willingness to trust and confide where dispassionate observation seemed to justify it, would have insured a free hand to the honest, methodic internist, utilizing diagnostic devices and remedies of proved merit.

A man may find those for his money that will shift his pillow, and rub his feet, and will trouble him no more than he would have them, who will present him with an indifferent countenance, and suffer him to govern himself, and to complain according to his own method. . . I have seen some, who have taken it ill when they have been told that they looked well, and that their pulse was temperate, contain their smiles, because they betrayed a recovery, and be angry at their health because it was not to

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be lamented; and which is a great deal more, they were not women neither. I describe my infirmities, but such as they really are at most, and avoid all expressions of ill prognostic and composed exclamations. If not mirth, at least, a temperate countenance in the standers by, is proper in the presence of a wise sick man. He does not quarrel with health, for seeing himself in a contrary condition. He is pleased to contemplate it sound and entire in others, and at least to enjoy it for company. He does not, for feeling himself melt away, abandon all thoughts of life, nor avoid to discourse of ordinary and indifferent things. I will study sickness while I am well; when it has seized me it will make its impression real enough, without the help of my imagination. We prepare ourselves before hand for the journey we undertake and resolve upon, we leave the appointment of the hour when to take horse to the company, and in their favor defer it.

The groans forced by the pain of the stone, were grown so familiar to my people, that nobody took any more notice of them. . . But in these travels you may be surprised with sickness in some wretched place where nothing can be had to relieve you; I always carry most things necessary about me; and besides, we cannot evade fortune, if she once resolves to attack us. I need nothing extraordinary when I am sick.

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I will not be beholden to my Bolus to do that for me which nature cannot. At the very beginning of my fevers, and sicknesses that cast me down, while entire, and but a little disorder in my health, I reconcile myself to Almighty God by the last Christian Offices, and find myself by so doing less oppressed, and more easy, and have got methinks so much the better of my disease. And I have yet less need of a scrivener or counsellor, than of a physician. To conclude the account of my frail humors, I do confess, that in my travel, I seldom come to my inn, but that it comes into my mind to consider whether I could there be sick, and dying at my ease; I would be lodged in some convenient part of the house, remote from all noise, ill scents, and smoke. (Of Vanity.)

In his portrayal of his attitude to sickness and his conduct under suffering he is at his best. His observations should be read and pondered by every doctor.

I think it to be more wholesome to eat more leisurely and less and to eat oftener; but I would have the value of appetite and hunger done Justice to. I should take no pleasure to be fed with three or four stinted repasts a day, at fixed hours, after a medical manner; who will assure me that, if I have a good appetite in the morning, I shall have the same at supper?

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Let us old fellows, especially, take the first opportune time of eating and leave to almanac-makers the hopes and prognostics. (Of Experience.)

I have no custom that has not varied according to accidents; but I only record those that I have been best acquainted with, and that hitherto have had the greatest possession of me. My form of life is the same in sickness that it is in health, the same bed, the same houses, the same meat, and the same drink serve me in both conditions alike; I add nothing to them but the moderation of more or less, according to my strength and appetite. My health is to maintain my wonted state without disturbance. I see that sickness puts me off it on one side, and if I will be ruled by the physicians, they will put me off on the other; so that by fortune and by art I am out of my way. I believe nothing more certainly than, this that I cannot be offended by the usage of things to which I have been so long accustomed. . . . You make a German sick if you lay him upon a quilt, as you do an Italian if you lay him upon a featherbed; and a Frenchman without curtains or fire. A Spanish stomach cannot hold out to eat as we can, nor ours to drink like the Swiss. (Of Experience).

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And, without a force upon myself, cannot sleep in the day time, nor eat between meals, nor breakfast, nor go to bed, without a great interval betwixt eating and sleeping, as of three hours after supper; and never standing upon my feet, nor endure my own sweat, nor quench my thirst either with pure water or wine, nor keep my head long bare, nor cut my hair after dinner; and should be as uneasy without my gloves, as without my shirt, or without washing when I rise from table, or out of my bed; and could not lie without a canopy and curtains, as if they were necessary things; I could dine without a tablecloth, but not without a clean napkin, after the German fashion, very incommodiously. I foul them more than they, or the Italians do, and make but little use either of spoon or fork[1] . . . Nature

[1] I observed a custom in all those Italian cities and towns through the which I passed, that is not used in any other country that I saw in my travels, neither do I think that any other nation of Christendom doth use it, but only Italy. The Italian and also most strangers that are commorant in Italy, do always at their meals use a little fork when they cut their meat. For while with their knife which they hold in one hand they cut the meat out of the dish, they fasten their fork which they hold in their other hand upon the same dish, so that whatsoever he be that sitting in the company of any others at meal, should unadvisedly touch the dish of meat with his fingers from which all at the table do cut,

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has also on the other side, helped me to some of hers, as no more to be able to endure two full meals in one day, without overcharging my stomach, nor a total abstinence from one of those meals, without filling myself with wind, drying up my mouth, and dulling my appetite, and finding great inconvenience in the evening air. For of late years, in night marches, which often happen to be all night long, after five or six hours, my stomach begins to be quessie, with a violent pain in my head, so that I always vomit before the day can break. When others go to breakfast, I go to sleep, and when I rise, am as brisk and gay as before . . . And I am

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he will give occasion of offence unto the company, as having transgressed the laws of good manners, in so much that for his error he shall be at the least brow-beaten, if not reprehended in words. This form of feeding I understand is generally used in all places of Italy, their forks being for the most part made of iron or steel, and some of silver, but those are used only by gentlemen. The reason of this their curiosity is, because the Italian cannot by any means endure to have this dish touched with fingers, seeing all men's fingers are not alike clean. Hereupon I myself thought good to imitate the Italian fashion by this forked cutting of meat, not only while I was in Italy, but also in Germany, and oftentimes in England since I came home: being once equipped for that frequent using of my fork, by a certain learned gentleman, a familiar friend of mine. THOMAS CORYAT: *Crudities.*

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sorry for several gentlemen, who through the folly of their physicians, have in their youth and health put themselves into consumptions . . . A man should addict himself to the best rules, but not enslave himself to them. Alteration, be it what it will, does distemper and astonish. Can any believe that chestnuts can hurt a Perigourdin, or one of Lucca; or milk and cheese the mountain people; men enjoy then not only a new, but a contrary method of life, a change that the more healthful could not endure. Prescribe water to a Breton of threescore and ten, shut a sea man up in a stove, and forbid a Basque footman walking, they will deprive them of motion, and, in the end of air and light . . . Both well and sick, I have ever willingly suffered myself to obey the appetites that pressed upon me. I give great authority to my propensions and desires. I do not love to cure one disease by another. I hate remedies that are more troublesome than the disease itself. To be subject to the stone, and subject to abstain from eating oysters, are two evils instead of one. The disease torments us on the one side, and the remedy on the other. Since we are ever in danger of mistaking, let us rather hazard, rather defer the discovery of the mistake till after pleasure . . . Acrimony and quickness in sauces were pleasant to me when young, but my stomach disliking them since,

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my taste incontinently followed. Wine is hurtful to sick people; and 'tis the first thing that my mouth disrelishes when I am sick, and with an invincible distaste. Whatever I take against my liking, does me harm; and nothing hurts me that I eat with appetite and delight; I never received harm by any action that was very pleasant to me; and accordingly have made all medicinal conclusions mightily give way to my pleasure. Physicians do ordinarily submit their rules to the violent longings that happen to sick persons, with very good success . . . I am sorry when I am sick, that I have not some longing that might give me the contentment of satisfying it; all the rules of physic would hardly be able to divert me; I do the same when I am well. I have observed, that both in wounds and sicknesses, speaking discomposes and hurts me as much as any disorder I can commit. (Of Experience.)

Montaigne, like most sufferers from gout, was proud of his complaint. He viewed his afflictions as to some extent incident to his time of life—"the gout, the stone, indigestion are all symptoms of long years as heat, rains and winds of long voyages." (Of Experience.)

We give here a facsimile of a note made by Montaigne in regard to his brief sojourn

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Montaigne mis a la Bastille

1588 estoit trois et quatre apres midi
estant logé aux fauxbourgs germain a Paris
et malade d'une espece de goulle qui lors
premier me mit m'auoit fesi il y auoit environ
trois iours ie fus pris prisonier par les capitenes
et peuple de Paris cestoit au temps que le Roy
en estoit mis hors par monsieur de guise fus
mené en la bastille et me fut ce mistere que s'estoit
a la sollicitation du duc d'Elbeuf lequel par
droit de represailles et au lieu d'un sien parant
cauhilhome de normandre que le Roy tenoit
prisonier a Roan la raine mere du roy auertie
par m^r pinard secretere d'estat de mon enprizo
sonement obtint de m^r sieur de guise qui estoit
lors de fort une au cq elle et du preuost des
marchans ueos le quel elle enuoia (m^r sieur de
villeroy secretere d'estat) en soignant aussi
bien fort en ma faueur que sur les huit heures
du soir du mesme iour un maistre d'hostel de la dicte
damoyselle me vint faire mettre en liberte.
moiehat les reserits du dit seigneur duc et
dachiot preuost adressa au clere capitene
pour lors de la Bastille

Account, in his own handwriting, of Montaigne's arrest and incarceration in the Bastille.

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in the Bastille. This is found in a copy of the "Éphémérides" of Beuther which appears to have been used by the Montaignes for entries of births, deaths, marriages, etc., very much as the family Bible is used among us today.

1558. Between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, being lodged in the Faubourg St. Germain at Paris and sick with a sort of gout which had seized me for the first time just three days before, I was made prisoner by the Captains and Citizens of Paris (it was during the period that the king had been put out by M. de Guise), conducted to the Bastille and given to understand that it was at the instance of the Duke of Elbeuf and by way of reprisal for the case of a certain Norman gentleman, his kinsman, that the King held a prisoner at Rouen. The Queen Mother of the King apprised by Mr. Binard, state secretary, of my imprisonment, obtained from M. de Guise, who was in her good graces and from the Provost of the Merchants to whom she sent word (M. de Villerey, state secretary, also exerting himself strongly on my behalf) that about eight o'clock of the same day a royal steward came to set me free by virtue of a warrant from the aforesaid Lord Duke and of the said Provost addressed to

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the clerk, Captain, for the time being, of the Bastille.

This occurred July 10. Montaigne's gout was in the left foot and he was conducted to the Bastille mounted on his own horse. The queen was in council together with the Duke of Guise at the time of the arrest and learned of it through popular rumor.

He views his situation with a certain complacency, forcing himself like a true philosopher to recognize how even with the stone he is better off than he might be under some other affliction.

The stone has this privilege, that it carries itself clean off. Whereas others always leave behind them some impression and alteration, that renders the body subject to some new disease, and lend a hand to one another . . . Since I have been troubled with the stone, I find myself freed from all other accidents, much more methinks than I was before, and have never had any fever since. I argue, that the extreme and frequent vomitings that I am subject to, purge me: and on the other side, my nausities, and the strange fasts I am forced to keep, digest my present humors; and nature in those stones voids whatever there is in me of superfluous and hurtful. Let them never tell me that

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it is medicine too dear bought. For what avails so many apozemes, caustics, incisions, sweats, setons, diets, and so many other methods of cure; which oft, by reason we are not able to undergo their violence and importunity, bring us to our graves: so that when I am ill, I look upon it as physic, when well, for an absolute deliverance. And here is another particular benefit of my disease; which is, that it most plays its game by itself, and lets me play mine, or else I only want courage to do it; for in its greatest fury, I have endured it ten hours together on horseback; do but endure only, you need no other regiment. The other diseases have more universal obligations, rack all our actions after another kind of manner, disturb our whole order, and to their consideration engage the whole state of life. This only pinches the skin, it leaves the understanding and the will wholly at our own dispose, as also the tongue, hands and feet. It rather awakes than stupifies you . . . I moreover observe this particular convenience in it, that it is a disease wherein we have little to guess at. We are dispensed from the trouble into which other diseases throw us, by the incertainty of their causes, conditions and progress, a trouble that is infinitely painful. We have no need of consultations and doctoral interpretations, the sense well enough informs us both what it is, and where it is . . . If I find them worse to-

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morrow, I will provide new remedies and applications. That this is true, I am come to that pass of late, that the least motion forces pure blood out of my reins: and what of that? I stir nevertheless as before, and ride after my hounds with a juvenile ardour; and find that I have very good satisfaction for an accident of that importance, when it costs me no more but a little heaviness and uneasiness in that part. 'Tis some great stone that wastes and consumes the substance of our kidneys, and of my life, which I, by little and little, evacuate. Now if I feel anything to rowl and stir, do not expect that I should trouble myself to consult my pulse, thereby to put myself upon some tormenting prevention. I shall soon enough feel the pain, without making it more and longer, by the disease of fear. Who fears to suffer, does already suffer what he fears. To which may be added, that the doubts and ignorance of those who take upon them to expound the designs of nature and her internal progressions, and the many false prognostics of their art, ought to give us to understand, that her ways are inscrutable and utterly unknown. There is great uncertainty, variety and obscurity, in what she either promises or threatens; old age excepted, which is an undoubted sign of the approach of death . . . There is nothing that ought so much to be recommended to youth, as activity and vigilance. Our life is

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nothing but motion: I move with great difficulty and am slow in everything, whether in rising, going to bed, or eating. Seven of the clock in the morning is early for me: and where I govern, I never dine before eleven, nor sup till after six. I have formerly attributed the cause of the fevers, and other diseases I have fallen into, to the heaviness that long sleeping had brought upon me, and have ever repented my sleeping again in the morning . . . Sleeping has taken up a great part of my life, and I yet continue at the age I now am, to sleep eight or nine hours together: I wean myself to my advantage, from this propension to sloth, and am evidently the better for so doing. I find the change a little hard indeed, but in three days 'tis over, and see but few that live with less sleep, when need requires; and that more constantly exercise themselves, nor to whom long journeys are less troublesome. (Of Experience.)

Example is a bright and universal mirror, and in all sciences. If it be a delicious medicine take it, 'tis always so much present good. I will never stick at the name nor the color, if it be pleasant and grateful to the palate; pleasure is one of the chiefest kinds of profit. I have suffered rheumatism, gouty defluxions, relaxations, palpitations of the heart, megrims, and other accidents, to grow old, and die in me a natural death, which I have been rid of when I was

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half fit to nourish and keep them. They are sooner prevailed upon by courtesy than huffing; we must patiently suffer the laws of our condition, we are born to grow old, to grow weak, and to be sick in despite of all medicine. I see everywhere men tormented with the same disease [as his] and am honored by the fellowship, forasmuch as men of the best quality are most frequently afflicted with it; 'tis a noble and dignified disease. That of such as are pestered with it, few have it to a less degree of pain, and yet they are put to the trouble of a strict diet, and the daily taking of nauseous drugs and potions; whereas I owe my good intervals purely to my good fortune. The fear of this disease, says one, did formerly affright thee, when it was unknown to thee; the cryings and roarings of those that made it worse by their impatience, begot a horror in thee. Consider this chastisement, 'tis very easy in comparison of that of others, and inflicted with a paternal tenderness: do but observe how late it comes. . . If thou tellest me, that it is a dangerous and mortal disease; what others are not? For 'tis a physical cheat to except any, and to say, that they do not go directly to death; what manner is it, if they tend that way by accident, and if they easily slide into the path that leads up to it. But thou dost not die because thou art sick, thou diest because thou art living. Death kills thee with-

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out the help of sickness: and in some, sickness has deferred death, who have lived longer by reason that they thought themselves always dying. To which may be added, that as in wounds, so in diseases, some are medicinal and wholesome. The cholic is oft no less long lived than you. We see men with whom it has continued from their infancy even to their extreme old age, and if they had not broke company, it would have afflicted them longer still; you ofter kill it than it kills you: and though it present you the image of approaching death, were it not a good office to a man of such an age, to put him in mind of his end? . . . Common necessity will however presently call thee away. Do but consider how artificially and gently she puts thee out of taste with life, and weans thee from the world; not forcing and compelling thee with a tyrannical subjection, like so many other infirmities which you see old men afflicted withal, that hold them in continual torment, and keep them in perpetual and unintermitted pains and dolors; but by advertisements and instructions at several intervals, intermixing long pauses of repose, as it were to give thee leave to meditate and ruminate upon thy lesson at thy own ease and leisure; to give thee means to judge aright, and to assume the resolution of a man of courage, she presents to thee the entire state of thy

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condition, both in good and evil, and one while a very cheerful, and another an insupportable life, in one and the same way. If thou embracest not death, at least thou shakest hands with it once a month; by which thou hast more cause to hope that it will one day surprise thee without warning. And that being so oft conducted to the water-side, and thinking thyself to be still upon the accustomed terms, thou and thy confidence will at one time or another be unexpectedly wafted over. A man cannot reasonably complain of diseases that fairly divide the time with health. . . I never fail of finding matter of consolation from some favorable prognostic in my past experience. Custom also makes me hope better for the time to come. Oh! how much does health seem so much the more pleasant to me after so near and continuous sickness. . . The worst that I see in other diseases is, that they are not so grievous in their effect, as they are in their issue. A man is a whole year in recovering, and all the while full of weakness and fear. . . Before they have unmuffled you of a handkerchief, and then of a callot, before they allow you to walk abroad and take the air, to drink wine, and eat melons, 'tis odd you relapse into a few new distempers. (Of Experience.)

My friends oft pity me before I feel the cause in myself; my looking-glass does not fright me,

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for even in my youth, it has befallen me more than once to have a scurvy complexion, and of ill prognostic, without any great consequence; insomuch, that the physicians, not finding any cause within, answerable to that outward alteration, attributed it to the mind, and some secret passion that tormented me within; but they were deceived. If my body would govern itself as well according to my rule, as my mind does, we should move a little more at our ease. (Of Experience.)

I am of the opinion that this temperature of my soul, has often raised my body from its lapses . . . I had a quartan ague four or five months, that had made me look miserably ill; my mind was always, if not calm, yet pleasant; if the pain be without me, the weakness and languor do not much afflict me; I see several corporal faintings, that beget a horror in me but to name, which yet I should less fear than a thousand passions and agitations of mind that I see in use. (Of Experience.)

But he can be cruelly sarcastic:

Thus the physician lies preaching to a poor languishing patient to be cheerful, but he would advise him a little more discreetly in bidding him be well. (Of Vanity.)

Experience is properly upon its own dung-hill in the subject of physic, where reason

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wholly gives it place . . . And Plato had reason to say, that to be a right physician, it would be necessary that he who would take it upon him, should first himself have passed through all the diseases he will pretend to cure, and through all the accidents and circumstances whereof he is to judge. For my part, I should put myself into such hands: for the others but guide us like him who paints the sea-rocks and ports upon the cloth, and there makes a figure of a ship to sail in all security; and put him to it in earnest, he knows not at which end to begin. They make such a description of our maladies, as a town-crier does of a lost horse or dog, such a colour, such a height, such an ear; but bring him to him, and he knows him not for all that. God grant that physic may one day give me some good and visible relief, namely, when I shall cry out in good earnest. (Of Experience.)

The arts that promise to keep our bodies and souls in health, promise a great deal, but withal, there is none that less keep their promise. And in our times, those that make profession of these arts amongst us, less manifest the effects than any other sort of men. One may say of them at the most, that they sell medicinal drugs, but that they are physicians a man cannot say. (Of Experience.)

If your physicians do not think it good for you to sleep, to drink wine, or to eat such and such

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meats, never trouble yourself, I will find you another that shall not be of his opinion; the diversity of physical arguments and opinions embraces all sorts of methods. I saw a miserable sick person panting and burning for thirst, that he might be cured; and was afterwards laughed at by another physician for his pains, who condemned that advice as prejudicial to him: had he not tormented himself to good purpose? A man of that profession is lately dead of the stone, who had made use of extreme abstinence to contend with his disease. His fellow physicians said, that on the contrary, this abstinence from drink had dried his body up, and baked the gravel in his kidneys. (Of Experience.)

Let us a little permit nature to take her own way; she better understands her own affairs than we. But such a one died, and so shall you, if not of that disease, of another. And how many have not escaped dying, who have their physicians always at their tails? (Of Experience.)

Like most people, like ordinary people, Montaigne, at times, lets his subject run away with him, says more than he means; like many a disgruntled patient he exaggerates what he considers his just case against the doctors. In truth it would be hard not to justify any unfavorable comment as we look back upon their practice. The "ordi-

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nary method of cures is carried on at the expense of life, they torment us with caustics, incisions, and amputations of limbs, at the same time interdicting ailments, and exhausting our blood; one step farther and we are cured indeed." (The Custom of the Isle of Cea.) But he had not our vantage ground and in many passages he affirms a favorable disposition to the profession by referring respectfully to its leaders. In his travels he consulted them and in his notes he refers to many eminent physicians. He speaks of Paracelsus, of Sylvius,[2] of Thomas Simon of Toulouse, Felix Plater,[3] Grynaeus (or else his lawyer son), who wrote on medicine and on mathematics. Paracelsus he

[2] Jacques Dubois, called Sylvius, (1478–1555), the teacher of Vesalius in Paris. Narrow-minded and selfish, he bitterly antagonized his pupil's achievements in anatomy. Sylvius named many of the important arteries, veins and muscles and had a high reputation as teacher and physician.

[3] The professors of physic were "Platirus who did read upon his own practice and Stapanus who did read Galen, *De Deff. Sympt:* and Bauchinus who did read upon anatomy and the two first had each for yearly stipend 150 gulden, 20 sacks of corn (I mean wheat comonly called bread corn) and 10 sacks of oats and the third had 100 dollars and 24 sacks of corn." FYNES MORYSON: *Itinerary.*

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seems to have sized up rather well as the brilliant revolutionary who may be right but scarcely commends himself as fully reliable. "How long is it that physic has been practiced in the world? 'Tis said that a newcomer, called Paracelsus, changes and overthrows the whole order of ancient rules, and maintains that till now, it has been of no other use but to kill men. I do believe that he will easily make this good: but I do not think it were wisdom to venture my life in making trial of his own experience." (The Apology.) Sylvius is "an excellent physician of Paris" but we scarcely subscribe to his quoted advice "lest the digestive faculties of the stomach should grow idle it were not amiss once a month to rouse them by this excess," *i.e.* a drinking bout. Montaigne himself was abstemious.

I cannot nevertheless understand, how a man can extend the pleasure of drinking beyond thirst, and to forgive in his imagination an appetite artificial, and against nature. My stomach would not proceed so far, it has enough to do to deal with what it takes in for necessity. My constitution is, not to care to drink, but as it follows eating, and to wash down my meat, and for that reason my last draught is always

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the greatest: and seeing that in old age we have our palates furred with phlegms, or depraved by some other ill constitution, the wine tastes better to us, as the pores are cleaner washed, and laid more open. At least I seldom taste the first glass well. (Of Drunkenness.)

Beer was the one drink that upset him.

I confess that, beer excepted, my appetite accommodates its self indifferently to all sorts of diet. (Of Education of Children.)

DOCTRINES ACCEPTED BY MONTAIGNE

He is after all but the man of his time and accepts the cautery, the incision, the value of bleeding; believes in the theory of humors and many a doctrine long since discredited or of doubtful justification such as maternal impressions.

Magicians are no very good authority for me, but we experimentally see, that women impart the marks of their fancy to the children they carry in their wombs; witness her that was brought to bed of a Moor: and there was presented to Charles the Emperor, and king of Bohemia, a girl from about Pisa, all over-rough and covered with hair, whom her mother said to be so conceived by reason of a picture of St. John Baptist, that hung within the curtains

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of her bed. It is the same with beasts, witness Jacob's ring-streaked and spotted goats,[4] and sheep, and the hares and partridges that the snow turns white upon the mountains. (Force of Imagination.)

And also in the subjects of which I treat, viz. of our manners and motions, the testimonies and instances I produce, how fabulous soever, provided they are possible, serve as well as the true; whether it has really happened or not, at Rome or at Paris, to Peter or John, it is still within the verge of possibility, and human capacity, which serves me to good use, and supplies me with variety in the things I write. (Force of Imagination.)

He credits the prevailing theory of contagion.

And as an infected body communicates its malady to those that approach, or live near it, as we see in the plague, the smallpox, and sore eyes that run through whole families and cities. (Force of Imagination.)

On the other hand he seems to have some notion of natural immunity.

And yet I have ever found myself very little subject to epidemic diseases, that are caught

[4] *Genesis* xxx, 32–43.

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either by conversing with the sick, or bred by the contagion of the air; I have very well escaped from those of my time, of which there has been several virulent sorts in our cities and armies. (Of Smells.)

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CHAPTER VIII

Montaigne The Traveler

In 1580 Montaigne, who had for some time been troubled with gout and nephrolithiasis, and had made trial of various French watering places, Cauterets, Eaux Chaudes, etc., set out on an extended journey through Germany, Switzerland and Austria to Italy, hoping to find some relief for his increasingly painful malady at the principal objective point, the famed Baths of Lucca, if not on the way thither. His party[1] included a person who combined the functions of valet and secretary. The commentators on Montaigne have naturally rated the series of somewhat random notes of travel, now written in the first person and now as coming from another, now in French, now in Italian, far below the "Essays" and have even affirmed that the

[1] Montaigne's party consisted of ten or twelve persons including valets and lackeys. Only one of the gentlemen made the entire journey with him. One stayed behind in Padua, his brother was detained in Rome by the consequences of a duel he fought there, etc. Montaigne regulated the itinerary, length of stops, etc.

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notes do not disclose the author's personality. The story of the journey[2] has no

[2] The manuscript of Montaigne's travel diary was found with other neglected papers, in a chest at the Château Montaigne when an ecclesiastic named Prunis went there to collect data for a history of Perigord. This was one hundred and eighty years after his death. Nothing had been known of the journal before. Over one-third of the writing is in Montaigne's hand and of this portion one-half is in Italian. Books I and II of the "Essays" were published just before Montaigne started on his travels. Book III was written after his return.

Two other notable travelers of this period whose writings amply confirm many of Montaigne's observations were Fynes Moryson and Thomas Coryat.

Fynes Moryson was born in Lincolnshire in 1566, two years after Shakespeare. His father was what would be called today the Chief Registrar of the Land Tax. After studying at Cambridge he went abroad for the definite purpose of securing material for a thesis on social conditions in Europe whereby to obtain an M. A. degree from Oxford whose reputation throughout Europe was at that time greater than Cambridge's. He sailed from the mouth of the Thames, May 1, 1591, returning to London on May 15, 1595. His second foreign sojourn lasted about two years. Moryson died in 1630. The manuscript of "The Itinerary" is in the library of Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

Thomas Coryat was born in 1577 and went to the Continent in 1608, where he traveled extensively, always on foot. In 1611 he published the account of his journeyings under the title of "Coryat's Crudities."

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moralizing but the casual comments on the asperities of the road or the comfort of a good inn are intensely interesting to those who want to know all they can about Montaigne, the man. One may be a true philosopher when sitting at ease in the seclusion of an inviolable library and yet display a wholly different spirit when settling accounts with a rapacious landlord, bargaining for post-horses, harrassed by guides or the petty officials at a frontier custom house.[3] Doubtless Montaigne some-

[3] Customs exactions at the confines of each petty state were very annoying. To substantiate this statement the following quotation from Fynes Moryson's "Itinerary" is apt. "The princes of Italy above all others in the world impose not only upon their subjects but upon all strangers passing through their territories great and many tolls, customs and like exactions . . . Myself returning from Padua towards England and having the testimony of the University (vulgarly called matricula) that I was a student thereof was thereby freed from many small payments in that State, as six soldi demanded at the gate of Padua, and eight soldi at Verona and some quattrines for the passing of bridges and the like . . . I carried nothing with me but some two or three shirts." "The searcher followed us to our inn (at Ferrara), there to search the small things we carried with us, and for this office of respect that he did not stay us and search us at the gate he extorted a reward from each one of us."

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times lost his temper while abroad—everyone does—but most of his reproaches were addressed to himself.

While he was traveling, Montaigne noted with regret three steps which he had neglected to take with regard to his journey. One was that he had not taken with him a cook, who might have learnt the particular methods of foreign lands, and some day at home have shown proof of his skill. The next was that he had not engaged a German valet, or joined himself to some gentleman of the country, for he felt it very irksome to be always at the mercy of a blockhead of a guide; and the last was that, before setting out, he had neither consulted those books which might have pointed out to him what rare and remarkable sights were to be seen in every place, nor included in his baggage a copy of Münster (the "Cosmographia" of Sebastian Münster, one of the earliest guide-books), "or some similar book."

All things considered, Montaigne's complaints were few. He resented the barbaric German arrogance and independence and at Constance this gave him an excuse to shift from the "Eagle" where he was badly

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lodged, to the "Pike," where we trust he fared better; but in general he liked German food and German inns and vastly preferred their stoves to open fireplaces.[4]

Their custom of warming the houses by stoves pleased us greatly, and none of our company complained thereof; for, after you have taken in a breath or two of the air which indeed may seem strange on entering a room, you are sensible only of a soft and regular heat. M. de Montaigne, who slept in a room with a stove, was loud in its praises, saying that all night he felt a pleasant moderate warmth. In warming yourself you burn neither your face nor your boots, and are free from the smoke of a French fireplace. At home we put on our warm furred dressing-gowns when we enter our apartments, but here people appear in doublet and bareheaded in the warm rooms, and put on thick garments before going into the air. . . . One of these [stoves] is of porcelain darkened to the colour of bronze, and made in the form of a group of large human figures, which, being heated, warm the room. Moreover, there are certain others, stationed close to the wall,

[4] I came into . . . high Germany . . . there is such frequent use of them in all those countries, especially in winter, that I lay not in any house whatsoever, but it had a stove. THOMAS CORYAT: *Crudities.*

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which give out water, this being brought to them from the fountain in the court below. This is a fine piece of work.

Their warm but light feather coverlets were a source of huge comfort. He thought the national boastfulness and quick temper were offset by honesty.

A constant cause of trouble was the heating of his room. Charges for a fire were high and even when the service was well paid for, Montaigne's requirements in this particular —he was a real *frileux*—seemed to cause grumbling everywhere. He had a horror of chilling from night air and the dew. "Arrived at Rovere very late, after travelling fifteen miles. Never until now did we journey in the dewfall, so carefully had we laid out our time on the road." The most serious grievance was the unsatisfactoriness of the beds in the average hostelry. He advised intending travelers to take their own mattresses with them and yet at Rovigo he notes that Italian mattresses are softer and smoother than French ones. He resented the absence at Bagni di Lucca of glass, even of linen shutters in the windows when every house in Switzerland, even the poorest, had

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glass windows. And there was no chimney in his room! He mentions at least *two* hotels as the worst in the country but his verdict on Italian inns was that they were in general good and often excellent.

There is something truly sublime in the picture of this elderly invalid incessantly tortured by acute pain, rising after a sleepless night to ride 18, 20 even 30 miles on horseback, supported by only a feeble hope of finding medical relief, but animated by a consuming interest in the affairs of men and in every novelty to be seen in a foreign land.

If we cannot share his delight in every sort of mechanical contrivance—the waterworks at Constance and Augsburg, the concealed *jeux d'eau* in the gardens of Italian noblemen,[5] which sprayed unsuspecting visitors, the provisions for drainage near Lucca which aroused in him an almost childish delight—we recognize his courage, his heroism in finding distraction for himself in such observations. As long as his lively intellect was stimulated or his fancy grati-

[5] The Italians specially delight in gardens, conduits of fresh water, fountains and building of fair palaces. FYNES MORYSON: *Itinerary*.

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R. MOSCIONI, ROME, ITALY

Stairway and fountains, Villa Lante, Bagnaia.

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fied by these things he could forget himself. It has been objected that he has so few remarks to make on the glories of Italian art or the marvelous monuments of antiquity and that the most beautiful scenery never drew from him suitable expressions of praise; but there is ample evidence that he appreciated all this. There can be no question that Montaigne enjoyed everything enjoyable; but he was making notes of a journey not writing a guidebook or a diary, and scenery may have been too provocative of revery and introspection to be altogether pleasant for a man in the throes of an incurable disease. At all events he does not dilate on his afflictions. They are mentioned as incidents of the day and no more, often interlarded between matters wholly foreign to himself and relating to something that happened days before.

If there was a single side of himself which he did not throw open to the public gaze it was the strictly emotional or sentimental side. But Montaigne was not a materialist, or beyond the reach of subtle and mysterious influences, and he loved beauty.

There is no heart so effeminate, that the

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rattle and sound of our drums and trumpets will not enflame with courage; nor so sullen, that the harmony of our music will not rouse and cheer; nor so stubborn a soul, that will not feel itself struck with some reverence, in considering the gloomy vastness of our churches, the variety of ornaments, and order of our ceremonies, and to hear the solemn music of our organs, and the grace and devout harmony of our voices. (The Apology.)

In a personal notebook of travel there was certainly little occasion to rhapsodize over things universally known. On the other hand he is circumstantial about all that was striking in out-of-the-way places. Of the fountains at Bagnaia he says that the architect has touched "the highest point of art, beauty and grace."[6] He waxes expansive over the superb country home of the Farnese family at Caprarola.[7] The por-

[6] The Villa Lante at Bagnaia belonged to the Dukes of Lante. It was not finished at the time of Montaigne's visit, though begun a hundred years before. Viterbo and Bagnaia are connected with the tragic story of Vittoria Accoramboni.

[7] It was designed by Vignola for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, nephew of Paul III. The palace, with beautiful internal decorations, is a pentagonal building with five wings around a central court.

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R. MOSCIONI, ROME, ITALY

The Caryatids, Villa Farnese, Caprarola.

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trait of Pico della Mirandola[8] which he saw at Urbino is described in detail. His notes do actually abound in appreciative allusions to all natural beauty. He delays leaving Ancona "to enjoy the beautiful prospect of the town and its situation." The site of Empoli is "most lovely." He was charmed by the scenery along the Adriatic coast. The vineyards and chestnut groves that cover the hills of Tuscany gave him keen delight. On the Sunday after getting word of his call to the mayoralty of Bordeaux he took a ride along the heights of Granaia and as he gazed on the countryside stretched at his feet pronounced it "the fairest and most fertile that the world could show." He paid full tribute to the beauties of the landscape near the famous falls of Terni. Lucca,[9] of course, he loved and every-

[8] "Earle Joannes Picus of Mirandula in the Duchy of Mantua," as Coryat calls him, "the mirrour of his time and the Phoenix of Italy." Della Porta, the botanist, phrenologist, playwright, particularly admired Pico's head. In connection with this portrait by an unknown painter it would be well to remember that a portrait of Mirandula is the only painting Montaigne refers to in his travels.

[9] Lucca, surrounded by vineyards and olive groves and the villas Montaigne loved, played its full part

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thing connected with it—city walls, palaces, people. "I never saw a town in a more pleasant site, surrounded as it is by a most beautiful plain two leagues in extent, and beyond this the lovely mountains and hills, which for the most part are cultivated to the tops." If he made the wonderful journey over the Mont Cenis Pass without a word about the grandeur of the scene we must remember that he was making a forced march in obedience to royal mandate, doubtless absorbed in thoughts of the duties he was about to assume, sick and

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in that long struggle of the cities for autonomy which is the salient feature of medieval Italian history. As the birthplace of Giovanni Diodati, who translated the Bible into Italian, and as a focus along with Mantua and Ferrara of a distinct Lutheran movement it has a better title to lasting fame. Charles v and Pope Paul III met for conference at Lucca in 1542, the Emperor being a guest at the Diodati Palace. It was during his visit that Giovanni was born. In 1525 an edict was passed imposing a fine of 50 ducats on any one introducing Lutheran books into the city. In 1553 the Diodatis fled for their lives because they had embraced the religious ideas of the Reformation. Through their branch houses in Lyons and Geneva the wealthy silk merchants of Lucca had close relations with the intellectual and religious movement in those cities and became deeply tinctured with Lutheran ideas. Then, too, Peter

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FRATELLI ALINARI, FLORENCE, ITALY

One of the Cascades at Terni.

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UNIV. OF MICH.

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suffering, chilled by the wintry weather. On the Puy de Dôme he passed a stone. "On Monday the 20th I started in the morning, and on the heights of Puy de Dôme I passed a stone, somewhat broad and flat. I had felt it all the morning and even the day before with a slight pain in the kidneys. It was neither very hard nor very soft."

In everything that related to the resorts visited and the use of their healing waters he is most minute and particular, telling just what he was expected to do and what he actually did. As a rational, highly intelli-

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Martyr, who came there in 1541 and later was made prior of San Frediano, was the son of an adherent of Savonarola, a friend of men like Cusano, Valdez, Carnesecchi. His expositions of the Gospels alarmed his superiors but influence protected him at first and he founded a school from which went forth men who filled important pastorates or professorships in Italy and Germany. Eventually he was driven from Italy. The followers of the new religion who sought safety in flight had their property confiscated. In 1562 the senate of Lucca forbade heretics to go to Spain, France, Switzerland and the Low Countries for refuge, and spies were sent out to make foreign residence impossible for them. Protests came from France and Switzerland but the fires of the Inquisition destroyed the Lucchese Lutherans, root and branch.

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gent patient who had profited little by the physicians but learned much by experience regarding what was good for him and what was not, he departed widely from conventional practices, perhaps to his advantage but certainly to the great astonishment of his fellow sufferers. On the other hand, in all his social relations while abroad Montaigne prided himself on being very correct and carefully conformed to local usage. He is everywhere, and on all occasions, a gentleman, though mortified occasionally at not getting the ceremonious reception he expected; disgusted at times by the bibulousness of Germans and the arrogance that developed with their potations; ashamed (as who has not been) of the behavior of some of his fellow countrymen abroad.

He tried to be simple, friendly, unobtrusive, wherever he went. He did not display that blatant pride in home institutions seen in the modern American, who confounds boastfulness with patriotism; he avoided the insular aloofness of the English traveler, ever fearful of embarrassing and compromising consequences from making chance acquaintances; he was not, despite his passionate admiration for Paris, con-

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vinced that it was the center of the intellectual world nor that France was the only model for all things good and beautiful.[10]

At Padua and elsewhere[11] he notes how many Frenchmen come to Italy to learn fencing and horsemanship and cheerfully concedes the superiority of the Italians in these accomplishments and that Italian horses are the most perfectly schooled of all. His statement that more fine horses and carriages are to be seen in Rome than in any other city still holds true.

Eager everywhere to conform to local customs he changes the hours of his repasts, and in the spirit of St. Paul eats what is set before him, only complaining when the wine is sophisticated or new. To the son of a

[10] And you who have not been to Paris—go! RUSKIN.

[11] Fynes Moryson saw Neapolitan gentlemen playing an equestrian game with a ball which they knocked about with long-handled mallets—a form of polo, doubtless. He says: "The Neapolitans are excellent horsemen and much use that exercise. And thereby excellent teachers to manage great horses which they keep also of their own in stables and yards fitted to the purpose. And Padua affordeth also most skillful masters and teachers to fence. So as the desire to learn these virtues and qualities draws many native and foreign gentlemen to spend some time in this university." *Itinerary.*

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wine merchant, and much more to a sick man, this was a matter of moment. It is only because of his physical condition that he makes so many references to food and lodging. He was no gourmand, scarcely a gourmet. He frequently went to bed supperless or had only a little toast, and habitually started his all-day horseback rides sustained only by a breakfast of bread and such fruit as he could obtain by the roadside. "Repletion hath in my case a cruelly sluggish effect on activity." He is equally at home when banqueting with a cardinal[12] or dancing with peasants. He visits impartially the Protestant church and the Catholic cathedral, conversing alike with Calvinist and Jesuit to compare what they have to say and form his own independent judgment.[13]

[12] At a dinner given by the Cardinal de Sens all the guests washed their hands before and after eating and all had napkins. Montaigne was a guest at one feast where many roast fowls were served, their plumage having been carefully restored to give them the appearance of living birds.

[13] At Kempten Montaigne visited the (Catholic) cathedral and on the same day went to the Lutheran Church. At Augsburg he attended both Catholic and Lutheran Churches. "We went (at Lindau) to see the Catholic cathedral, built in 866, where all things are as they have always been, and we saw also the church served by the Lutheran ministers."

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Those of us who have lived abroad know how easily the globe-trotter forgets the restraints and standards of home and yields to temptations grown insidious through the piquancy of a foreign flavor. Montaigne had an eye for the women. He loved a pretty face and records his disappointment when some town like Fano, famous for its beautiful women, has only ugly ones to show him, a good man of the place informing him that the time for that had long gone by. Venice too disappointed him in this respect. But at Ancona, at any rate, he found the women "for the most part good looking."[14]

The inevitable effect of health on mental outlook is clear to the reader though not always patent to the author. We forgive the harsh and disparaging tone with which he refers to Florence when we discover that he passed a stone while there and that his bed was infested with vermin. What mental complacency could be expected from a man

[14] According to Montaigne, "Fano is famous beyond all other towns of Italy for its fair women but all those we saw were very ugly indeed." In Montaigne's time all highborn ladies in Italy wore masks in public. Our traveler's observations must have referred mainly to the looks of peasants.

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who "passed 2 stones and a large amount of gravel" even though "without perceiving anything more than a slight pain in the lower abdomen;" who was kept awake by vermin and then did enough sight-seeing to exhaust the most indefatigable modern. He noted the Grand Duke's stables and menagery; visited one of the Ducal palaces where "certain men were engaged in counterfeiting eastern jewels and working in crystal, for this prince is somewhat given to alchemy and the mechanic arts;" finally he made the round of the churches. No wonder he cries out "in this city no seemly diversion was to be had, neither in arms nor horsemanship nor letters." Yet the "Florentine Academy" was founded in 1540 and the year after this visit the Accademia della Crusca[15] so that it must have boasted a few choice spirits.

And there was Bianca Capello. Montaigne dined with her and the Grand Duke.[16] "His

[15] So-called metaphorically of sifting bad words from the good as *bran* is sifted from meal . . . and this academy hath lately published a dictionary. FYNES MORYSON: *Itinerary*.

[16] Francis, Duke of Tuscany, had married Bianca Capello two years before Montaigne's visit to Florence. Bianca, the daughter of a rich Venetian

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FRATELLI ALINARI, FLORENCE, ITALY

Bronzino's portrait of Bianca Capello in the Pitti Gallery.

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wife was seated in the place of honour, and the duke below her, then the sister-in-law of the duchess, and then her brother the husband of the aforesaid. According to the Italian taste the duchess is handsome, with an agreeable and inspiring face, full bust, and a bosom displaying itself as it may." M. de Montaigne fully recognised in her the charm by which she had been able to "cajole this prince and to insure his devotion for a long time." At a subsequent visit he makes the amende honorable and admits that he can see a reason for calling Florence "the beautiful." It seems remarkable, but we must believe him when he says that at only two places in Italy was he annoyed by vermin in his bed—Florence and Viterbo. But Montaigne was wonderful in the way he triumphed over the frailties of the body. We note that the "Falcone," where he put

merchant, eloped with a young Florentine. In Florence she soon attracted the notice of the duke and gave him every encouragement. She lived at court as his mistress until the husband was disposed of. The duke's marriage was opposed by his brother, the cardinal, who became the object of Bianca's hate. She prepared poison for him but Francis took it by mistake and died. Bianca then poisoned herself.

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up in Pavia, was the worst in Italy. There were no mattresses on the beds and a separate charge was made for firewood. But even when suffering he could be fair. "Susa is a large, populous town. I was here taken with a violent pain in the right knee, a pain which I had felt for several days, and which went on from bad to worse. The inns are better than in other parts of Italy; good wine, bad bread, plenty to eat, such is the rule everywhere in Savoy." His one universal, sweeping condemnation is not exactly a criminal charge. "In all Italy I have never found a barber who could shave me or cut my hair properly." Mark Twain made the same complaint about France!

How well he realized the danger of having judgment warped by feeling is shown in the following passages.

It is certain that our apprehensions, our judgment, and the faculties of the soul in general, suffer according to the movements and alterations of the body; which alterations are continual. Are not our wits more spritely, our memories more prompt and quick, and our meditations more lively in health, than in sickness? Do not joy and gayety make us receive subjects that present themselves to our souls,

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quite otherwise than care and melancholy? Do you believe that Catullus his verses, or those of Sappho please an old doting miser, as they do a vigorous and amorous young man? . . . For it is most certain that men's judgments are sometimes more prone to condemnation, more sharp and severe; and at others more facile, easy, and inclined to excuse. He that carries with him from his house the pain of the gout, jealousy or theft by his man, having his whole soul possessed with grief and anger, it is not to be doubted but that his judgment will lean this way . . . 'Tis not only fevers, debauches and great accidents that overthrow our judgments; the least things in the world will do it. We are not to doubt, though we are not sensible of it, but that if a continued fever can overwhelm the soul, a tertian will in some proportionate measure alter it. If an apoplexy can stupify, and totally extinguish the sight of our understanding, we are not to doubt but that a great cold will dazzle it. And consequently there is hardly one single hour in a man's whole life, wherein our judgment is in its due place and right condition, our bodies being subject to so many continual mutations, and stuffed with so many several sorts of springs and devices, that I believe physicians know how hard it is, but that there must be always some one or other out of order . . . Dare hardly to tell the vanity

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and weakness I find in myself . . . If health and a fair day smile upon me, I am a very honest and good natured man, if a corn trouble my toe, I am sullen, out of humor, and not to be seen. The same pace of a horse seems to me one while hard, and another easy, and the same way one while shorter, and another more long: and the same form, one while more, and another less taking. (The Apology.)

Montaigne took a passionate delight in travel. His secretary said: "I verily believe that, if he had been alone with his own following, M. de Montaigne would rather have gone to Cracow or to Greece by land than have turned towards Italy," whither he was bound for his health.

He took great pleasure in his visits to strange countries, finding therein forgetfulness of his age and of his ill-health, but he could never win over the rest of the company to this view, each one of them being anxious to have done with travel and to return. He was ever wont to say that, after an uneasy night, he would rise eager and lively when he remembered he was about to sally forth to see some fresh town or district. Never did I see him less subject to fatigue or less querulous of his ailments; so full of spirit both on the road and at his lodgings; so apprecia-

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tive of everything he saw, and eager for conversation with strangers, indeed I believe that his habit drew off his thoughts from his infirmities. When the others complained to him of his practice of leading the party over indirect and winding roads, often returning to the spot whence they had set out (which he would often do when he heard report of something worth seeing, or when he saw reason for varying his plan of travel), he would reply that, for his own part, he never set forth for any place other than that in which he might at present find himself; and that it was impossible he should miss or go aside from his route because this route always lay where places unfamiliar to him were to be seen; and that, provided he did not fare the same road twice over, or see one place a second time, he never considered that he had failed one jot in his original purpose. As to Rome, which other people might easily see, he was less fain to visit it than other places, because it was well known to every one, and moreover every lackey was ready to give news of Florence and Ferrara. He said that he seemed to be in like case to one who reads some delightful story or good book, and dreads to turn the last page. The pleasure of travel was to him so keen, that he hated the sight of the place where he ought rightly to stop and rest; moreover, he devised several projects of travelling exactly as the

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mood might seize him, supposing that he should separate from his present companions.

If we follow Montaigne on his pilgrimage we shall glean interesting information about places and people and many an odd story of medical import. He tells us that at Vitry-le-François a woman named Mary had just been hanged for going about disguised as a man, marrying, and resorting to unlawful appliances in order to sustain the part. Another Mary in this town, distinguished as "Bearded Mary," passed for a girl until in leaping a ditch "the distinctive signs of manhood showed themselves." Paré recites the same story but puts the age when the transformation took place at fifteen instead of twenty-two and says that when the youth went home weeping and told his mother that "his bowels had come out of his belly," the doctors and surgeons were called in and verified his true sex. Mary's name was changed to Germain and male attire ordered by the bishop.

A WELL-CONDUCTED HEALTH RESORT

Four leagues beyond Bar-le-Duc the first interruption due to sickness occurred. "M.

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de Montaigne was obliged to stop on account of his colic, which also occasioned him to abandon the desire he had formed of seeing Toul, Metz, Nancy, Jouinville, and St. Disier, towns scattered along this route, in order to get as soon as possible to Plommieres." At Plombières, Montaigne detected in one spring a taste of iron, in the other a taste of alum. The patrons of the place drank sparingly of the waters and only after a purge, but bathed two or three times a day. Some took their meals, were cupped and even scarified while in the bath. Our traveler excited comment by only bathing every other day and at four in the afternoon and by staying in only an hour; but he drank copiously at seven in the morning. When he bathed he went without his supper. He notes that here people were cured of pimples and ulcers. In marked contrast to the earlier practices in the bath-houses of central Europe, the proprieties seem to have been rigidly observed. It was "reckoned indecent for men to bathe naked or with less clothing than a little jacket, or for women to wear less than a chemise." The strictest rules were in force forbidding all "prostitutes and immodest women to

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enter the baths or to be found within five hundred paces of the same under penalty of a whipping at the four corners of the town." Any householders receiving or concealing such undesirable patrons were liable to fine and imprisonment.

The same penalty will fall on those who shall use any lascivious or immodest discourse to any ladies, or damsels, or other women and girls who may be visiting the baths, or touch them in a manner unbecoming, or enter or quit the baths in ribald fashion, contrary to public decency. And because by the boon of the baths aforenamed God and nature have afforded us cure and relief in many cases, and because decent cleanliness and purity are necessary in order to keep off the many contagions and infections which might well engender in such a place, it is expressly commanded to the governor of these baths to take the utmost care, and to inspect the persons of those who frequent the same by day and by night; to make them keep decency and silence during the night, making no noise, nor scandal, nor horse-play. And if any person will not render obedience the governor shall forthwith carry the affair before the magistrate, so that an exemplary punishment may be given. Beyond this it is prohibited to all persons coming

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from infected places to repair to Plommieres under the pain of death.

Montaigne "found the water easy to drink, and the effects of the same all he could wish."

Appetite, digestion, and sleep were alike good, and his general health suffered no injury from these waters. On the sixth day he was seized with a colic, more violent than his ordinary attacks, and with pain on the right side, where he had never hitherto been troubled, save once in the course of a very trifling attack at Arsac. This seizure lasted four hours, and while it was on him he felt plainly the working and the movement of the stone in the urethra and the lower part of the stomach. The first two days he passed two small stones from the bladder, and gravel occasionally afterwards. When he left these baths he deemed that he had still in his bladder both the stone of this attack of colic, and certain other small ones of which he had felt the downward passage. He judged the qualities of these waters, with regard to his own case, to be much the same as those of the high spring, Banieres, where there is a bath. He found the temperature of the bath very mild, indeed, children of six months or a year old are wont to sprawl about therein.

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CHAPTER IX

Incidents of the Road

At Bâle, Montaigne dined with Felix Plater, the first physician to report a death from status lymphaticus and to attempt a serious working classification of diseases. At the time of the visit, Plater was occupying a fine house he had built for himself, painted and decorated in the French style. Montaigne was interested in the book of simples which he was making. Instead of illustrations the specimens themselves were inserted, glued to the pages with great care and skill, to show leaves, fibres, etc. Some of them had been prepared as much as twenty years before. Both in Plater's house and in the public school of the city there were several complete human skeletons.

Our next quotation is characteristic of the notes, several items of widely different nature being embodied in one illuminating paragraph:

> Certain of the people lamented to M. de Montaigne over the dissolute carriage of the women, and the prevalent drunkenness of the

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city. We witnessed an operation for rupture done by a surgeon on the child of a poor man, who was very roughly handled by the operator, and likewise saw the very fine public library overlooking the river in a pleasant situation.

Baden[1] must have been extremely popular. The hotel where Montaigne put up lodged 175 persons and by means of its 11 kitchens fed 300 every day.

Ladies who are fain to take their bath with daintiness and decency can repair to Baden with confidence, for they will be alone in the bath, which is like an elegant cabinet, light, with glazed windows, painted panelling, and clean flooring. Everywhere are chairs and small tables for reading or gaming while in the bath. The bather may empty and fill the bath as often as he likes, and will find a chamber adjoining . . .

The water when drunk tastes rather flat and soft, like water heated up, and there is a smell of sulphur about it, and a certain prickling flavour of salt. Amongst the people of the place it is chiefly used in the bath, in which they subject themselves also to cupping and bleeding, so that I have at times seen the water in the two

[1] In the vicinity of Baden interesting remains of a Roman military hospital of the Imperial Era have been unearthed.

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public baths the colour of blood. Those who drink it by habit take a glass or two at the most. The guests as a rule stay six or seven weeks, and some or other frequent the baths all through the summer. No country sends so many visitors as Germany, from whence come great crowds . . . The water is less clear than that of the other springs we have seen, and when drawn from the spring it shows certain minute fibers. Moreover, it contains no sparkling bubbles like other sulphurous waters when the glass is filled . . .

M. de Montaigne took some of it on the Monday morning after we arrived, seven small glasses, and on the next day five large glasses, amounting to ten of the aforesaid. On this same day, Tuesday, at nine in the morning, while the others were at table, he took a bath and fell into a heavy sweat in bed afterwards, having stayed in the bath only half an hour. The people of the country, who stay all day in the bath playing and drinking, stand only up to the middle in water, but M. de Montaigne lay full length and was covered to the neck . . . On the Thursday M. de Montaigne drank the same quantity of water, which acted well and rid him of a small amount of gravel. Still, he found these waters more powerful than any others which he had ever tried—whether from the strength of the water itself or from the

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present habit of his body—and accordingly he drank them more sparingly.

On Friday, October 7th, at seven in the morning, after breakfast, we quitted Baden; and, before we set out, M. de Montaigne drank the same quantity of the water as he had taken on five previous occasions. With regard to the operation of the same, concerning which he was more sanguine than he was in the case of any other bath he had visited (both as to the bathing and the drinking), he was free in his praises of these baths beyond all the rest, not only because the place itself, and the baths and the private apartments, are comfortably and conveniently managed, but also because in all apartments, visitors are always able to go to their own rooms without passing through the rooms of other people. Moreover, persons of small means may find quarters to suit them quite as easily as those who are rich.

Journeying along, Montaigne remarks that "there are many lepers in this country, the highways being full of them." The secretary records that, at Lindau:

M. de Montaigne made trial of the feather coverlets, such as they use in bed, and was full of praise thereof, finding them light and warm at the same time. It was a saying of his that people of fastidious taste had more occasion to

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complain, when travelling, of their bed furniture than of aught else, and he commended those who carried a mattress or curtains amongst the baggage when visiting strange countries.

At Stertzing, in the Tyrol, the secretary relates that—

M. de Montaigne suffered this night from colic for two or three hours, and very sharply, to judge from what he said next morning. Then indeed, when he rose from bed, he passed a stone of medium size which crumbled easily: outside it was yellowish, and when broken showed white in the middle. He had taken cold the previous day and found himself ailing, but he had not suffered from colic since Plommieres. This seizure partially removed the fear he felt that at Plommieres some gravel had descended into the bladder without passing therefrom, and that certain matter, there arrested, was collecting and consolidating. Now, seeing what had happened, he felt he might reasonably infer that, if there were indeed other particles, they would have joined themselves to the stone he had just passed. On the way he complained of pain in his loins, and now he declared he had prolonged the day's journey simply on this account, deeming that he would find greater ease on horseback than elsewhere. At this place he called for the schoolmaster to converse with

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him in Latin, but the fellow was a fool from whom he could get no information as to the country.

Reaching Verona he had to show the bill of health[2] issued to the party at Trent. "Not that there was any talk of danger of the plague, but this is always done by custom or by way of tricking wayfarers out of a few coins." Montaigne visited the various churches but saw nothing worthy of note "either in the ornaments or in the beauty of the women present," but did observe "where the Germans have left divers marks of their presence."

From Verona he rode 30 miles at a stretch, a rather unusual day's march, to Vicenza where he visited the house of the Jesuits and "saw their store of distilled water, for the sale of which they keep a shop . . . They make, likewise, medicinal draughts for

[2] Thomas Coryat says that he would never have found lodging within the city of Lyons had he not, after much questioning, been given a little ticket at the city gate. In Lyons he procured a health certificate as it was useless to start for Italy unless so provided. The Venetians were the greatest sticklers for such papers, but in most of the cities of Italy it was demanded that new arrivals give proof that they were in sound health at the last place visited.

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all sorts of maladies." Here begin the complaints about wine. His secretary says:

At this place we failed to get old wine, which troubled me greatly on account of M. de Montaigne's colic; for he had to drink thick wine instead of the good wine we had got up to this time. We thought of the German wines with regret, though they are for the most part spiced and diverse in their odour, and though they have a liquorish flavour like sage; indeed, they call one of them *vin de sauge*, which is pleasant enough when the palate is wonted thereto, seeing that it is also good and generous.

Further on, at Ferrara, the wine was both thick and new, a combination of abominations which made Montaigne apprehensive of an attack of colic. The Italians have always been noted for taking less pains with their wines than the French or Germans but sophistication was not peculiar to them. The prejudice against new wine is at least as old as the "Regimen Sanitatis." (*Vinum sit clarumque vetus, subtile, maturum.*) During the vintage in Italy those who have toiled in the vineyards and at the presses may have all the new wine they wish to ask for and advice against it without the

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asking. On the second visit to Florence, Montaigne observes:

They have a fashion here of putting ice in the wine-cups, but of this I took very little, being uneasy in my body and troubled with pain in the side, besides passing an incredible quantity of gravel. My head still troubled me, and I could not get rid of the sensation of dulness and a certain indefinable heaviness over the brow, the cheeks, the teeth, the nose, and all parts. I imagined this discomfort arose, from drinking the sweet, heady wines of the country, because my headache returned after I had drunk heartily of the Trebisiano. I must have been inflamed through travelling in the summer heat, and it needed a great quantity of the wine to quench my thirst on account of its sweetness[3]. . .

[3] Thomas Coryat was made sick by drinking the sweet wines of Piedmont undiluted and urges his readers to put water in their wine when abroad. Coryat appears to have been easily upset by wine. His second journey took him to India where he finally died as the result of well intentioned hospitality at the hands of fellow-countrymen who gave him sack brought from England, he calling for it as soon as he heard the drink mentioned. "'Sack, Sack! is there such thing as Sack? I pray give me some Sack' and drinking of it, though I conceive moderately (for he was a very temperate man) it increased his flux which he had then upon him and this caused him within a few days . . . to come to his journey's

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At Urbino the wine was adulterated. At Carrara it was treated with white of egg and clarified so as to look like old wine but by this process it merely acquired an unnatural taste. The wines of Lucca were passable, strong and well matured but not very palatable. At the Baths the white wines were sour and crude.

Montaigne hated adulteration of all kinds. At the Baths of Lucca he discovered that even the mineral water was being fraudulently disposed of.

I made to the deputy-judge a suggestion, which I deemed only reasonable, that the government should make certain regulations—of which I gave him an example, easy to carry out, and admirably fitted for the end in view—to be enforced with regard to the vast crowd of traders who resort hither to carry away the water of these springs into all parts of Italy. These regulations would oblige them to show a voucher for the genuine character of the water they retail, and thus put an end to knavery, an instance of which I gave him from my own experience.

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end." Coryat's death is thus described by his friend and contemporary the Rev. Edward Terry, Chaplain to the Right Honorable Sir Thomas Rowe, Lord Ambassador of Great Britain to the Great Mogul.

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As we discover how constantly the pleasures of travel were interfered with by recurrences of pain and suffering, we come to understand more clearly why Montaigne has so much to say about food and lodging on the road. His diet was naturally a matter of the greatest importance. In this light many of his strictures upon native inns and customs make it clear that Montaigne tried to be broad and just in his estimates. The sophistication of wine appears to have been carried on as a fine art even in Montaigne's day. He says:

I was forced here to drink new wine, as no other is to be had in these parts. By storing it in casks made of a certain wood, and by treating it with the white of eggs, they clarify it so that it looks like old wine, but it has a taste which is not natural.

I suspect that the apothecaries here, instead of fetching this water from Pistoia, where it is said to rise, make an imitation thereof out of ordinary water, for I found it had, in addition to its saltness, a very strange flavour.

Whether Montaigne tried the mud baths at St. Eleana is not stated. His description of them follows:

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There are also rooms for dry heat, made in various fashions, but mud baths are what they chiefly use. This treatment is practised in a large bath below the bath-house and open to the sky, fitted with a machine by which the mud is pumped up to the house adjacent. Here are provided divers appliances of wood made to fit each limb—legs, arms, thighs and other parts—wherein the member to be treated is placed and the appliance filled with mud, which is renewed as often as is needed.

At Ferrara we get evidence of the police surveillance of houses of public entertainment. "On the door of every room in the inn is an inscription, '*Ricordati della boletta,*' [remember your passport] and immediately a stranger arrives he must needs send his name and the number of his attendants to the magistrate, who will then give orders for lodgment, but if this be not done no one will take them in." At Epinal the party had been refused admission to the "pretty little town" because of passing through Neufcastel, "where the plague was not long since." Here the party had been annoyed by a long delay at the city gate on account of the required manifest and bill of health.

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Such papers seem to have been in demand in most of the towns visited.

At Bologna Montaigne found much to interest him and notes that among the Frenchmen who had come there to learn horsemanship and fencing the best pupil with the foils was a youth from Bordeaux. (At Padua he had found a hundred Frenchmen learning to fence and it annoyed him to find Rome literally thronged with his compatriots.) The pleasure of the stay was marred, however, by indisposition.

On the Saturday after dinner we saw a play by the comedians, with which M. de Montaigne was highly pleased, but from this, or some other cause, he was troubled afterwards with headache, a distemper which had not molested him for several years, but it passed away during the night. Moreover at this time he professed to be freer of pain in the kidneys than for a long while. and rejoiced in digestive powers as sane as when he returned from Banieres.

Going on by way of Florence [*vide supra*], he came to Siena after a long stage, the longest recorded in the notes. To ride thirty-two miles after what he had been through seems temerity itself, but Montaigne held fast to the opinion that riding

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did him no harm and the constant change of scene and the charm of the road afforded him unfailing distraction from sad thoughts. He put up at the "Crown," a tavern still standing in 1852. There was no glass or even linen in the windows and this made Montaigne very anxious as he feared the night air.

VISITS TO ROME

On the last stage of the journey to Rome he started three hours before sunrise to traverse the Roman Campagna by daylight, a prudent measure as far as malaria was concerned, but inspired by the feeling that the cold air of the morning was hurtful to his stomach. He was "ill at ease till the sun came up." A ride of thirty miles brought him to the city gate where there were the usual difficulties over the quarantine because he had passed through regions where the plague was raging. Montaigne repaired at once to the "Bear" at the corner of the Via di Monte Brianzo and the Via dell' Orso. This building, one of the few remaining medieval houses of the plainer sort, was still standing in 1870. It dated from the year 1,300 but there is

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FRATELLI ALINARI, FLORENCE, ITALY

The Porta del Popolo or People's Gate, Rome. Here began the old Flaminian Road. Through this gate all travelers from the north entered Rome before the era of railroads. Martin Luther lodged in the monastery seen just within the gate, to the left. In the church of this monastery was buried Vannozza de' Catanei, mistress of Alexander VI and mother of Lucrezia Borgia. The gate was built from designs by Michelangelo and Vignola.

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no ground for the popular belief that it had been patronized by Dante. In a day or two he removed to lodgings in the Via di Monte Brianzo. It is the scribe who regrets they did not go to the "Golden Bowl" instead, where they could have enjoyed regal surroundings for the same price. Montaigne avoided it just because of the furnishings of silk and cloth of gold.

Gregorovius gives some interesting data about Roman hostelries. They centered mainly around the Campo di Fiore where the windows were available for witnessing the public executions which took place here. Montaigne went to see the execution of a noted malefactor and in this connection mentions the practice in vogue of reviving people who had been tortured by applying the warm bodies of fowls just killed to flesh torn with pincers, or to the stumps of mutilated limbs.[4] He tells how a few years before, some of the numerous Spanish or Portuguese residents in the city had associated themselves together for indulgence in certain immoral practices and that nine or ten

[4] In his "Diary" Samuel Pepys alludes to the use of similar treatment for the drowned, "and they did lay pigeons to his feet."

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of them were detected and sent to the stake. One of the popular inns, the "Cow," had belonged to Vannozza de' Catanei, mistress of Pope Alexander VI. She also owned the "Lion" very near Montaigne's inn. The "Bear" was hard by the Piazza Fiammetta where Caesar Borgia's mistress had had her abode, and near the church where she was buried as an *honesta mulier*. We cannot ascribe to the jaundiced eye of a sick man (during his two stays in the Eternal City Montaigne passed six or seven calculi and considerable gravel and had numerous attacks of colic) the comments on the insignificant character of the Roman streets for they retained it down to our own day. The "Bear" was on the left bank of the Tiber and behind it was a congerie of narrow, unlit, ill-smelling streets[5] worse than those of Paris before the time of Baron Haussmann.

Montaigne found much to entertain and interest him. Many of his notes have a bearing on things medical. The Pope,

[5] The permanent architectural characteristics of modern Rome date largely from the reign of Sixtus V, successor of Gregory XIII.

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R. MOSCIONI, ROME, ITALY

The Inn of the Bear, Rome.

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Gregory XIII,[6] then over eighty years old, he described as the most healthy and vigorous man possible for his years, troubled "neither with gout, colic, nor stomach complaints of any kind."

He saw a priest's attempt at exorcism in the case of a man possessed, melancholic and in a trance. The attendant had a napkin tied around his neck, and held him fast. When cured he turned him over to his friends and ordered him taken home. The priest explained to Montaigne that the devil to be driven out was a very obstinate one and that it would be a hard job. Only the day before he had relieved a woman of the devil—an unusually large one who, as he

[6] Ugo Buoncompagno of Bologna, by whose order the Julian calendar was reformed in conformity with the plans of Luigi Lilio Ghirardi, a physician of Verona. This work was largely carried on in the Collegio Romano founded by Gregory XIII. There in later years the great microscopist Athanasius Kircher studied and taught. Gregory XIII exhausted the papal treasury by his liberal benefactions and to recoup was forced to confiscate many of the Roman estates. He had a medal struck to commemorate the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew as a signal triumph of the Church, but wept on learning the horrible details of the slaughter.

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came out, made her vomit nails and pins and a bit of the devil's hairy skin.

On the 16th of March, after our return to Rome, I was taken to make trial of the Roman hot baths at St. Mark's, which have the best repute. I underwent a treatment of moderate strength, and, though I went alone, met with all possible respect. The usual custom is to take a lady as companion, who like yourself will be rubbed by the men in attendance. I learned here the composition of the unguent used for removing hair from the skin. It is made of two parts of quick lime and one of arsenic, blended with lye, and will have effect in less than a quarter of an hour after application. On the 17th I was troubled, not insupportably, with colic for five or six hours, and afterwards passed a large stone the shape of a pine kernel.

On March 13th an old Antiochan patriarch, an Arabian, and well versed in five or six of the languages of those regions, and quite ignorant of Greek or of the other tongues we use, a personage with whom I had become very intimate, gave me a certain compound for the relief of my gravel, and written directions for the employment of the same. He bestowed it for me in a little earthen pot, where I might keep it ten or even twenty years, and assured me that I might anticipate a complete cure of my dis-

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temper by the first dose I should take. In case I might lose the writing he gave me, I will set down his instructions here. The drug should be taken at bedtime after a light supper; a piece the size of two peas should be mixed in lukewarm water, after having been crumbled in the fingers. This will make five doses, one to be taken every alternate day.

A HEBREW CEREMONY

Montaigne gives a minute account of a circumcision witnessed.

This ceremony takes place in the private house, the lightest and most convenient chamber thereof being chosen for the purpose. In this particular case, because the dwelling itself was ill suited therefor, the ceremony took place in the lobby by the door. As with us, a godfather and a godmother are provided for the child, whom the father names, and the circumcision is performed the eighth day after birth. The godfather seats himself on a table with a pillow on his lap, and the godmother brings to him the child and then withdraws, the child being swaddled after our own fashion. The godfather then loosens the bandages below, and the assistants and the one whose duty it is to perform the operation all begin a chant and continue to sing during the operation, which

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takes about a quarter of an hour. He who officiates need not be a rabbi, and any one of them, whoever he may be, will be anxious to discharge this duty, because they hold that frequent bidding to such a function is a great blessing: nay, they will pay to be called in, offering here a vestment and there something else useful to the child. Moreover, they believe that any one who may circumcise a particular number of children will enjoy a privilege after death, to wit, that the parts about the mouth will never be eaten by worms. On the table where the godfather sits they forthwith lay out plentiful provision of all instruments necessary for this operation, and in addition to these an assistant holds in his hands a phial of wine and a glass. There is also an earthen brazier, at which the operator first warms his hands; and then the child, with the swaddling bands unloosed, is presented to him by the godfather, who holds it in his lap with the head towards himself. The operator then takes hold of the part and pulls forward the skin thereof with one hand and with the other thrusts back the fleshy substance and fixes a silver instrument on the skin. This instrument, kept close to the flesh within, holds the foreskin in proper position and prevents any injury to the other parts from the act of cutting. This done, he cuts off the skin and buries it at once in some earth,

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FRATELLI ALINARI, FLORENCE, ITALY

The circumcision of Christ as conceived by Mantegna.
Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

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which along with other apparatus of the mystery is beside him, ready prepared in a basin, and then with his bare nails proceeds to remove any other particle of skin which may be left on the flesh. This operation is one requiring considerable skill and is somewhat painful, but it is quite free from danger and the wound is almost always healed after four or five days. The children cry as ours cry when they are baptized. As soon as the operation is done, the bystanders hand forthwith to the operator some wine, who, after having taken some of it into his mouth, sucks the bleeding flesh and then empties his mouth, repeating this act thrice. Then they give him in a wrap of paper red powder, which they call dragon's blood, and with this he dresses and covers the wound, and then binds up the same neatly with linen cut for the purpose. He is offered a glass full of wine which, according to report, he blesses by the words he speaks over it, and then drinks a mouthful. He next dips his finger in it and thrice lets the child suck some drops of wine therefrom. This glass they send as it is to the mother and the women of the family who are in some other part of the house, that they may finish the wine that remains. Then another, a third person, takes a silver instrument, made round like a tennis ball, with a long handle thereto, and pierced with little holes like our perfume

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boxes, and holds it first to the nose of the operator, next to the child, and last to the godfather. They believe that the odours therein help to strengthen and purify the soul for devotion. The operator meantime bears the stains of blood on his mouth.

THE FLAGELLANTS

Montaigne was much impressed and mystified by the doings during Lent when people could be seen on the streets scourging themselves with ropes until their backs were raw and bloody. Some of the flagellants were not more than twelve or fourteen years of age, boys and girls. He calls it, "the most striking sight I ever saw." Their earnestness and apparent indifference to pain was remarkable; indeed, they seemed to enjoy it and "they might have been chattering about their matters, laughing, bawling about the street, running and leaping when there was so great a crowd that the procession fell somewhat into confusion."

Along with them went certain men carrying wine, which was offered to them now and again, and some of them took a mouthful thereof, and sometimes sweetmeats were given. The wine-

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carriers often took wine in their mouths and then blew it out and moisted therewith the lashes of the scourges, which were of cord, and were wont to become coagulated with the blood drawn to such an extent that it was necessary to moisten them in order to separate the thongs. They also blew the wine over the wounds of some of the victims. The appearance of their shoes and breeches suggested that they were people of mean condition, and that the majority of them had sold themselves to this service. Moreover, I was told that they were wont to grease their shoulders with a certain preparation, but the wounds I saw were so natural, and the scourging was so lengthy, that assuredly no medicament could benumb them to pain. And with regard to those who may have hired them, what profit would they get were this exhibition nought but trickery?

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CHAPTER X

Pastimes and Distractions

Montaigne dined with cardinals and other notables, attended the pageants of the church, visited ruins and galleries. A public exhibition of horsemanship given by an Italian who had been for years held prisoner by the Turks afforded him great cause for astonishment. With a guide he faithfully made the round of all the sights. From his visit to the library of the Vatican[1] he got the keenest satisfaction.

The ward[2] in which Montaigne sojourned was where the courtesans were thickest and one of his diversions was to frequent

[1] Founded by Nicholas v (son of a surgeon of Sarzana) who discovered the lost work of Celsus in the library of Sant' Ambrogio, Milan. The first librarian was Giovanni Fortelli. Under Sixtus iv, Platina was director. Sixtus v built the present edifice.

[2] Not far away was the quarter of the city inhabited by the people who made a living by copying manuscripts. Their golden age was under Nicholas v; then they had their influential guild and their special chapel in the church of San Tommaso.

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FRATELLI ALINARI, FLORENCE, ITALY

The Vatican Library. Fontana was the architect. The mural decorations are by artists of the seventeenth century. The chief impulse to the creation of a library at the Vatican was due to Nicholas v, son of a physician of Sarzana.

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their society. Rome was thronged with them. (At the close of the fifteenth century they numbered 5,000 out of a total population of 100,000 people.)[3]

These ladies charge as exorbitantly for the privilege of simple conversation (which was what I sought, desiring to hear them talk and to take part in their play of wit) as for the supreme favor and are just as niggard thereof.

Montaigne's chief pleasure was

The sight of the ladies, and especially the courtesans, who exhibit themselves behind their lattices with such refinement of trickery that I have often wondered at the address they display in attracting men's eyes. Often I have got down from my horse and induced some of these ladies to admit me, and have wondered how it was they contrived to make themselves appear so much handsomer then they really were. They have the art of letting a beholder distinguish them by whatever trait of theirs is most seemly; they will let you see only the upper part of the face, or the lower, or the side, veiling and unveiling according to the particular style of countenance, so that an ugly woman is never to be

[3] Thomas Coryat estimates the number of courtesans in Venice, including those of Murano, Malamocco and vicinity, at 20,000.

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seen at a window. Each one takes her position there for the purpose of saluting and bowing to her acquaintances, who, as they go by, throw up many a glance.

He indulged in the same pastime in Florence.

I went out today alone to amuse myself by inspecting those ladies who may be seen by any one who may be so inclined. I saw those of the greatest note, but they were not of much account. The courtesans here stand at the doors of the houses to attract lovers, just as those of Rome and Venice sit by the windows. They take their station at suitable hours, and may be always seen, some with large and some with small company, talking and singing in the streets . . . Their lodgings are all in one part of the city, and are wretched even for what they are, being in no way equal to those of the Roman or Venetian courtesans, any more than their occupants can compare with the aforesaid ladies in beauty, or grace, or carriage.[4] If any

[4] "At Naples each poor courtesan pays to the Prince two Carlines a month, besides greater extortions upon those are fair and having great and many lovers grow proud in apparel and rich in purse." He estimates the number at 60,000. The tribute from this source to the State of Venice he estimated at 300,000 crowns yearly. The pope also made no less gain from those in Rome. In some cities

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one of them is minded to dwell outside these bounds she must not make herself conspicuous, and must hide her real calling under some fictitious one.[5]

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women of this class are distinguished by their costume. At Siena they wore yellow, white or black veils. In some cities, as at Florence, they were restricted to one or more streets. In others sumptuary laws restricted them to sober dress but they obviated them by bribing the police. (How modern this sounds!) No special requirements were in force as to residence in Venice. At Florence they had "a peculiar court of justice called the court of honesty where judges clad in purple give them right against those who pay them not for the use of their bodies or any way defraud them. Each courtesan hath commonly her lover whom she maintains, her *balordo* or gull who principally maintains her, besides her customers at large and her *bravo* to fight her quarrels . . . The richer sort dwell in fair hired houses and have their own servants but the common sort lodge with bandes called ruffians to whom in Venice they pay of their gain the fifth part . . . paying besides for their beds, linen and feasting and when they are past gaining much are turned out to beg or turn bandes or servants. And for relief of this misery they have nunneries where many of them are admitted and called the converted sisters." (There is a street of this name in Rome today.) Quotations from FYNES MORYSON'S *Itinerary*.

[5] Thomas Coryat in "Crudities" tells us that at the play they wore double masks reaching from the top of the forehead to the neck and their necks were so covered and wrapped around "with cobweb

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The question of segregation was discussed in his time.

Some say that to put down public stews is not only to disperse fornication into all places that was confined to one, but moreover, by the difficulty, to incite wild and idle people to this vice. (The Apology.)

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lawn and other things that no part of their skin could be discerned." Each wore a short taffeta cloak. They sat alone on high by themselves. Had any man, even a noble, attempted to unmask one of them he would have been cut into pieces before he could leave the place. One or two little galleries were reserved for them in the theater. They were tolerated and granted considerable privileges, being regarded as less than the evils that might accrue if the class did not exist, and for the sake of revenue to the state. This revenue was estimated as equivalent to the cost of a dozen galleys in the fleet of the Republic. Their residences were palaces, their clothes gorgeous, their jewels abundant—diamonds, pearls and other costly stones—their cheeks painted, their bodies scented. When these have children the babies are sent to a foundling asylum if not too large to be passed in at the small aperture provided in the wall of the building. Otherwise the mother must bring up the child as best she can. For a male, the profession of arms or the sea or some other public service is open; for a female her mother's career. Each courtesan has her ruffian or bravo to execute her wishes of revenge if defrauded of her pay.

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R. MOSCIONI, ROME, ITALY

The Villa Medici, Rome.

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R. MOSCIONI, ROME, ITALY

Palace in the Villa Medici to which are accredited the winners of the Prix de Rome at the Paris Salon.

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Pope Sixtus v instituted or put in execution severe laws against "outlaws, courtesans, quarrels, etc."

In Venice, while at supper one evening, a messenger comes with a present of "a little book of letters which she had put together" from Signora Veronica Franca. Montaigne gives the servant two crowns. Signora Franca was married in her youth to a Dr. Paniza whom she left to take up the career of a courtesan, her name appearing in an official catalogue giving the names and residences of the hetairæ of the city. Later she became a dilettante in letters and cultivated the friendship of eminent writers and painters. In middle life she went in for religion and good works and tried to found an asylum for penitent women.[6] She died at forty-five. The book in question was an assortment of letters from her personal correspondence and dedicated to Cardinal d'Este. This prelate was living near Padua in a very fine house belonging to a gentleman of that city.

[6] Both Thomas Coryat and Fynes Moryson mention that it was customary for courtesans to retire in middle life to nunneries. Margarita Emiliana "a rich cortezan of Venice" founded a monastery between Venice and Murano.

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"He was sick with gout and had been there more than two months for the sake of the baths but more on account of the near vicinity of the ladies of Venice and all sorts of diversion." Fynes Moryson estimated the income of the Venetian government from courtesans at 300,000 crowns a year. Montaigne was astonished at the way these women flaunted their charms and spent money on furniture and clothing.

Montaigne made the tour of the walls of Rome which he rightly says can be done in three or four hours going at a foot pace, for it is only about twelve miles around; he listened with enjoyment to the sermons of popular preachers during Lent; went to Tivoli and Ostia, returning from the latter in a coach and suffering no discomfort—"a rare experience with me;" tried the local baths. The many charming gardens were a source of peculiar delight to him and he testifies to the liberality of the proprietors. "All these beautiful spots are free and open to anyone who may desire to enter therein. . . . The vineyards are amongst the most beautiful features of Rome."

All these recreations kept me free effectually from melancholy, which is the death of me, and

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FRATELLI ALINARI, FLORENCE, ITALY

Twin palaces and formal garden, Villa Lante, Bagnaia.

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from irritability with which I was troubled neither without nor within doors. Thus I found Rome a very pleasant place of sojourn. . . Nothing is so adverse to my own health as listlessness and sloth, and in Rome I was never without occupation. . . I find it, of all towns in the world, the one most filled with the corporate idea, in which difference of nationality counts least; for by its very nature it is a patchwork of strangers, each one being as much at home as in his own country.

"I know not how others find the air of Rome but I myself found it very pleasant and healthy . . . I never breathed air more pleasant or healthy to my temperament." He quotes a saying to the effect that Roman air is bad for the feet but good for the head. The Romans for the sake of health "find out the different characteristics of the various streets and quarters of the city and even of the suites of apartments in their houses . . . Even those who live in hired dwellings maintain at great cost three or four houses so that they may shift at the proper season according to the advice of their physicians." If this is not strictly true today, it is a fact that certain sections of the city are reputed more healthy than others and that rental

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is largely in proportion to the number of windows that get the sun.

Montaigne enumerates the varieties and qualities of the meat, fish and vegetables obtainable in the pontifical city. "We tasted artichokes, beans and peas about the middle of March. . . The oil is so good that I never feel that irritation of the throat which always troubles me in France when I have partaken generously of it." Grapes were to be had all the year round.

At Loreto,[7] Montaigne, who was "vastly entertained and interested" by what he saw and heard at the miracle-working shrine, received from "a rich young Parisian traveling with a large following" a circumstantial account, attested to by members of his suite, of how his diseased leg had been cured there in a former visit.

All the surgeons of Paris and Italy had been baffled, the patient had spent more than three thousand crowns, and his knee had been swollen, powerless, and very painful for the last three years. It grew worse, and more inflamed and

[7] According to legend, the house of the Virgin at Nazareth was micraculously transported by successive stages to this spot (1295 A.D.) Loreto was made a township by Sixtus v.

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FRATELLI ALINARI, FLORENCE, ITALY

The Shrine and interior of the Holy House, Loreto. According to the tradition of the Church this building was miraculously transported through the air from Nazareth.

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red, so that he was thrown into a fever. For several days he had ceased to use any medicament or remedy; when, having fallen asleep, he dreamt all of a sudden that he was healed, and that a flash of light seemed to shine around him. He awoke, cried out that he was cured, called for his servants, arose from his bed, and began to walk for the first time since he had been seized with this infirmity. The swelling of the knee disappeared, the shrivelled and half-dead skin got well from that time without any further remedy. Being now completely cured, he had come back to Loreto, his cure having been worked about a month earlier, while he was here. He had been in Rome while we were staying there. These were all the authentic facts I could collect from the discourse I had with him and with his people.

Montaigne put up votive tablets for himself, wife and daughter but one feels that he did this largely through his ever-present desire to be all things to all men. In Germany and elsewhere he left a wooden tablet bearing his name and arms in every inn where previous guests had observed this practice.

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CHAPTER XI

Seeking Recovery in Earnest

We may conveniently insert here an account of the prolonged hydrotherapy Montaigne underwent at the health resort he esteemed above all others. He preferred to patronize abroad such spas as combined pleasant company, comfortable quarters and a variety of good food with the medicinal virtues of the waters. He found all these at the Baths of Lucca whose springs had been famous from Roman times. The Baths are beautifully located some twenty miles from the city of that name, at the confluence of two mountain streams whose ripples fill the valleys with music.[1] Scattered

[1] These valleys were made famous among literati by Heine, in his "Reisebilder"; but the value of the medicinal springs was known to physicians and patients as early as the tenth century and perhaps in Roman times. Frederick II, who enacted so many laws bearing on medical education, health and sanitation throughout his Italian dominions, was one of the first distinguished patrons of the place. The fortunes of the Baths of Lucca fluctuated with those of the charming city of Lucca. In the fourteenth century certain citizens founded a Society of the

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about the steep hillsides covered with chestnut trees are hotels, villas and palaces connected by wide shady avenues and well-kept paths. "The rooms are pleasant and private . . . each set of apartments has a water-closet and a public and private entrance . . . From my chamber I could hear all night the gentle murmur of the river below."

Companions of the Baths of Corsena (that was the original name) and one Puccio, a member, built a hospital near the springs. As existing accommodations for bathers were insufficient the Republic of Lucca appointed Puccio a sort of commissioner for the place and he did his work of enlarging and improving the buildings very well. Lucca's famous lord, Castruccio Castracani, found time to improve the roads to the Baths and build bridges in the vicinity in the midst of more warlike endeavors, for he crowned many of the nearby mountains with castles to strengthen his hold on the country. After Castruccio's death the Baths passed to Louis of Bavaria, and finally became an appanage of one of the hospitals of Lucca. So low had the fortunes of the republic fallen by the middle of the fifteenth century that the Baths were leased to two barber-surgeons for the nominal rent of 12 pounds of trout, twice a year. These lessees neglected the place and we next find the Baths put under the care of three councillors of the Guild of Merchants. Finally the rich citizen, Domenico Bertini, patron of the artist Civitali, undertook the restoration of the establishment, building chapels and new bath houses.

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Hither at a later date came Shelley, Byron, Charles Lever, the Brownings, Walter Savage Landor, Tennyson, and many other famous personages, not for the baths, but for the pure country air in the days before railroads had brought Switzerland, the Tyrol and the Engadine within easy reach of foreign sojourners in Italy.

Dr. Bendinelli of Lucca published a book about the Baths in 1483 which stimulated local interest but they were already favorably known abroad. The waters were shipped on mule-back to the Duke of Ferrara in 1593. Prince Ferdinand of Austria received shipments regularly at Innsbruck. Lucca shared the general rearrangement of Europe ordered by Napoleon and became the fief of his sister Élise Bacciocchi, Princess of Piombino. Though she regarded Lucca as a very small domain for a person of her importance and eventually wheedled from the Emperor the whole of Tuscany, she did a great deal for the Baths, building an excellent road from Lucca, erecting a palace for her occupation and encouraging various industries and amusements among the local population. After the fall of Napoleon, Lucca passed to Marie Louise, reverted to Austria and finally became a part of united Italy.

Next to Montaigne, the most distinguished patient to seek healing at the Baths of Lucca was the great anatomist Gabriele Falloppio, an authority on mineral waters, the discoverer of the semi-circular canals, the auditory nerve and chorda tympani, and a versatile writer on surgery and anatomy. He is

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In all, Montaigne spent nearly five months here and he has left us a minute account of everything he did during his two sojourns. His initial experience was a disagreeable one. He was made very sick by a dose of cassia taken on the advice of his landlord, an apothecary, whom he

enthusiastic in his praise of the Baths, saying: "I thank God for many things, but more specially for having created the hot springs of Corsena. Indeed it appears that He almost made them with His own hands, for I, who was entirely deaf, have regained three-quarters of my hearing by the use of douches of these waters. Other deaf people I saw who were cured, and blind men whose eyesight was restored. Therefore it is not astonishing that I say figuratively that the baths of Corsena were made by God's own hands." . . . "The Villa with its good air, excellent food, fine buildings, and gentle, amiable inhabitants, seems a veritable paradise."

Remarkable was the visit of the Chevalier de St. George, son of James II, a pretender to the throne of England, accompanied by his consort Marie Sobieski. The simple inhabitants accorded the adventurers a royal welcome and in return James Stuart proceeded to exercise the royal prerogative of touching for scrofula or king's evil. The ceremony was most elaborate and attracted attention far and wide. To treat the Pretender as a king was to offend England, and the English ambassador to Turin and Tuscany terrified the Lucchese by threatening to stop the importation to England of olive oil and other native products by way of reprisal.

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pronounces much "lacking in intelligence compared with my apothecary in Rome." Montaigne had to forego his dinner and was laid up "for well nigh four and twenty hours and made a vow to take no more of the stuff. . . I would rather suffer from colic than have my stomach thus upset, my taste ruined and my general health deranged by cassia."

He drank the water in large quantities after being told that this was the proper thing. It was tasteless and slow in its action.

Some take it in bed, the physicians giving special directions to keep the stomach and the feet warm, and to avoid all fatigue. People of the neighborhood have it conveyed to their houses three or four miles distant. As a proof that this water is not strongly aperient it may be noted that the apothecaries here keep a certain water brought from a spring near Pistoia, sharp on the palate and very hot when drawn from the well, which they give to patients before taking the native water, alleging that quicker and more efficient result is thereby induced . . . If I may give an opinion concerning these waters I would say they can do little harm or good; that they are ineffectual and

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feeble, and the fear is that they may inflame the kidneys rather than purge them . . . The bed of the stream from which the drinking water comes is red and coated with rust, wherefore, seeing that it was likewise very insipid, I concluded that it contained much iron and would be binding in its effect; indeed little came of what I took on this Thursday. Medicine, after all, is a poor affair. I said casually a little time ago that I repented having taken so strong a purge inasmuch as this water, finding vacancy within, acted as nutriment . . . The effect of this water upon me was an increase of strength, and I began to digest it half an hour after taking it; moreover, I made a good round of two miles on the way back to my lodgings. Perhaps this abnormal exercise may have made me feel young again. Every other morning I had gone straight back to my room to avoid the chill of the morning air, my house not being more than thirty paces from the spring . . . Some of the people here take three or four grains of coriander in every glass of water they drink, as a remedy for wind. On the Easter of May 14th I took more than five pounds' weight of the water of Bernabo, my glass holding somewhat more than a pound.

On Tuesday, May 16th, according to the local custom, which seems to me an excellent one, I gave over drinking the water and

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remained in the bath an hour or more, having settled myself right under the conduit-pipe, because in the other parts of the bath the water seemed somewhat chilly. Being troubled continually with wind in the epigastrium and the intestines, and in less degree in the stomach—albeit without pain—I suspected that this discomfort was caused by the water, wherefore I gave up drinking it. This morning I found the bath particularly agreeable, and could easily have taken a nap there. It did not produce perspiration, but I had myself well rubbed, and then went to bed for a while.

On Thursday I was a little more on the alert and bathed somewhat earlier. In the bath I sweated fairly well and gave my head a douche under the spout. The bath left me rather weak, with a feeling of heaviness about the reins, and I voided gravel continually and some phlegm likewise as if I had drunk of the spring, indeed it struck me that this water used in the bath produced the same effect as when drunk . . . Here I observed a marked result of the use of this bath, forasmuch as my brother (M. de Mattecoulon) who had never passed any gravel either in common way or while drinking the water at any other bath in my company, now passed a large quantity . . . On Monday morning I went somewhat late to my bath, as I was shaved and had my hair cut, and I bathed my

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head more than a quarter of an hour by holding it under the principal spout . . . And as to shaving the head, the custom here with all was to be shaven, and then put a piece of satin on the head, held only by a sort of net, but my smooth pate had no need of this . . . At times I felt my eyes dazzled when I exerted them in reading or gazing on any glittering object. I was greatly troubled thereanent, remembering that I had suffered from this weakness ever since I was seized with headache at Florence, that is to say, heaviness about the forehead without any pain; a haziness before the eyes which, though it did not limit my vision, disturbed it in a way I cannot describe. Since this time this headache had recurred twice or thrice, and now became more persistent, but left me free otherwise. But after I used the douche to my head it came back every day, and my eyes watered freely, but without pain or inflammation. Moreover, until I had this attack I had not suffered from headache for more than ten years; and, fearing lest the douche may have induced this weakness of the head, I did not use it today—Thursday—and remained only an hour in the bath.

Hearing that it had a reputation for strengthening the liver and removing eruptions on the face he remarks: "A fact of which I made careful note as a service I

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would fain render to a most estimable French lady."

He found things much to his liking. Only at Bagnères were the lodgings better and that resort alone of all he had visited compared with it for beauty of situation. "People live more by rule at these baths than at our own and abstain rigorously, especially from drinks." Hour glasses were provided at each of the baths here.

I slept and read as I was inclined, and when I went abroad I always found conversation in plenty with the people in the streets, who would be ready for a chat at any hour of the day; and then there were the shops, and the churches, and the market-place. Going about like this, from one country to another, I was never at a loss for material for the satisfying of my curiosity. And all this time I felt my mind at ease, as much as ill-health and old age would allow, and little prone to seize opportunities for disturbing itself from the outside world. The only loss I felt was that of a sympathetic companion, for, being alone, I had to enjoy all these pleasures by myself, and could not share them with another.

Montaigne enlivens his stay by giving a ball and goes into many minutiae about the selection of prizes for the girls and his

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method of allotting them. He joins the country people in their dancing to show himself democratic in spirit or, as he puts it, "so as not to seem over-ceremonious." His habitual politeness was never laid aside. "I used the same bath on the two following days, and on the 19th I went again and remained there two hours, rather later in the day in order to allow a lady of Lucca the first turn, a just and proper rule being here observed to give the ladies the use of their bath at their convenience."

And now we have some reflections on physicians and a strange tale or two about their inefficiency.

Both of the springs did me much good wherefore I feel that I have been a gainer in refusing credence to those physicians who recommend their patients to give up drinking at once supposing that a cure be not effected the first day . . . I have just read concerning these waters in a book written by one Donati, a physician, his advice being to take a light dinner and a good supper; and, for my experience after drinking the water for another day, I decided that his view was the correct one. Franciotti, another doctor, controverts him in this and in divers other particulars. [Donati and Franciotti

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were physicians of Lucca who had published treatises on the Baths of Lucca.] . . . It diverted me to consider the various prescriptions given by physicians in different parts of Italy, so great was their antagonism, and this was especially marked in the matter of these baths and douches; indeed, out of twenty opinions no two were found to agree, but, on the other hand, the authors accused each other of murders of all sorts. . .

The aforesaid patient suffered great trouble through the strange action of wind, which was wont to issue from his ears with such force that he could not sleep, and when he yawned great volumes of wind would burst out from the same place. He declared that he could best ease his stomach by using as a clyster four large coriander comfits after moistening and softening them in his mouth, the relief being sure and speedy. He was the first person I ever saw wearing one of those big hats of peacock's feathers and covered with light taffetas; the crown, a good palm's height, was thick, and had within-side a coif of sarcenet made to fit the head so that the sun might not strike upon it. It was surrounded by a curtain a foot and half wide, to serve the purpose of our parasols, which indeed are very inconvenient to use on horseback.

The physicians are wonderstruck to see how the majority of French guests here take the

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waters in the morning and baths the same day. . . . On the Tuesday I remained two hours in the bath, and held my head under the douche for a good quarter of an hour. At this time a Cremonese merchant living at Rome came to the bath. He was afflicted with divers strange infirmities, nevertheless he could talk and walk about and seemingly enjoyed his life. His chief infirmity lay in the head, his memory having perished, so he said, through some weakness thereof; for instance, after a meal he would not be able to say what dishes had been put before him. If he happened to leave the house on any business he must needs always come back ten times to inquire where was the place to which he was bound. He could hardly ever get through the paternoster. When he did get to the end of it he would begin it again a hundred times, never perceiving at the end thereof that he had begun, or at the beginning that he had finished. He had suffered from blindness, deafness, and toothache, and had, moreover, such an access of heat in the reins that he always wore a piece of lead over that region. For many years he had observed most strictly the rules laid down by his physicians in his case.

Of a certain judge who visited him he says:

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Amongst other matters he told me a singular story about himself, how, through pricking the ball of the thumb with an artichoke[2] some years ago, he had like to have died from inanition, how on this account he fell into such a wretched state that he lay in bed five months without moving. As he lay all this time on the reins, they became so inordinately heated that a discharge of gravel was produced from which he had suffered for more than a year and from colic as well. At last his father, the governor of Velitri, sent him a certain green stone, which he had got from a friar who had been in India, and while he had this stone about him he suffered neither from gravel nor pain. He had been in this state for two years. As to the prick aforementioned the thumb and the greater part of the hand were useless, and besides this the arm was so much weakened that he came every year to the baths of Corsena to treat the arm and thumb with the douche, as he was now doing.

It was while here that Montaigne picked up a remarkable story about a man who was taken captive by the Turks and remained with them a long time so that he was given up for dead by his relatives.

[2] In Hazlitt's translation the cause of the trouble is given as the sting of a beetle.

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Finally he came home and at first was not recognized by his mother.

Then he made himself known to her, and after having been as it were lost ten or twelve years, kissed his mother, who shrieked aloud and fell senseless and showed no sign of life until the next day, the physicians being in despair of her. She came round at last, but she died soon afterwards, every one being of the opinion that this shock shortened her life.

A patient of some consequence, the nephew of a prominent cardinal, was taken sick and the case being obscure a consultation was held. Montaigne tells us that he laughed in his sleeve when the physicians in attendance waited on him with the request that he listen to their opinions and arguments because the patient was resolved to be guided entirely by his decision. "The same request was made to me with regard to other matters both here and at Rome."

He accepts the current story that a leper who bathed and drank the waters was cured.

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CHAPTER XII

Montaigne's Condition Grows Worse

Montaigne appears to have received no real benefit from his faithful and persistent health-seeking at the Baths of Lucca. His stay there was marked by much digestive disturbance, attacks of colic, headache, pains in various parts of the body and severe toothaches. After describing his sleepless nights with the latter he says:

On August the 25th my kidney troubles abated, and I found myself about as well as before, save that I had frequent pain both by day and night in my left cheek, but it did not last long. I remember to have been troubled with the same pain when at home. On the 27th I was so sharply troubled with toothache after dinner that I sent for the doctor, who, when he had taken account of all the symptoms, and had marked especially that the pain subsided while he was there, decided that this was no material fluxion, but one extremely subtle, and little else than wind which ascended from the stomach to the head, and, having mixed itself with the humours there, caused this disorder. This opinion seemed to me reasonable, seeing

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that I had often suffered from similar seizures in other regions of my body.

A mood of discouragement was the result.

It would be too great cowardice and squeamishness on my part if, knowing that I am every day in danger of death from these ailments, and drawing nearer thereto every hour in the course of nature, I did not do my best to bring myself into a fitting mood to meet my end whenever it may come. And in this respect it is wise to take joyfully all the good fortune God may send. Moreover there is no remedy, nor rule, nor knowledge whereby to keep clear of these evils which from every side and at every minute gather round man's footsteps, save in the resolve to endure them with dignity, or boldly and promptly make an end of them.

Naturally enough he now becomes inclined to disparage the waters.

I am sure this draught gave me the vapours and made my head ache, and on Tuesday I drank nine pounds from the common spring and felt my head affected immediately after. In sooth my head was in very bad case, having never recovered from the effects of the first bath I took. It has pained me less often of late, and in

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a different way, as it has not weakened me or dazzled my eyes as it did a month ago. I suffered chiefly in the back, and pain never attacked my head, but it flew to my left cheek, affecting all parts thereof, the teeth down to the very roots, the ear, and a portion of the nose. The pang would be brief, but as a rule sharp and burning and wont to attack me frequently both night and day. This is how my head fared at this juncture. I am firmly convinced that the fumes of this water both in drinking and in bathing—though I hold drinking to be the worse—are very bad for the head, and even worse for the stomach. And on this account the patients here are forced to take medicines to correct the action of the water. On the Thursday I gave up drinking and rode in the morning to see Costrone, a large village in the mountains.

On Sunday, September the 3rd, I spent more than an hour in the bath, and was much troubled by wind, but without pain. In the night and on Monday morning I had toothache so badly that I feared it must arise from a decayed tooth. I chewed mastic all the morning without relief. During the night I sent for an apothecary, who gave me some *aqua vitæ*, and bade me hold it to the spot where the pain was sharpest. The relief I got was marvellous; for, as soon as I took it into my mouth, the pain

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ceased; but as soon as I spat out the spirit the pain returned, wherefore I was forced to keep the glass always at my lips. I could not keep the spirit in my mouth continually, for, as soon as the pain was reduced, I would through weariness fall into a heavy sleep, and then some drops of the spirit would run down my throat and choke me so that I was forced to get rid of it. Just at daybreak the pain seemed to leave me.

On the Tuesday morning all the gentlemen staying at the bath came to see me as I lay in bed. I afterwards caused a plaster of mastic to be put on my left temple, where the throbbing pain had been worst, and had less pain during the day. At night they applied lint to the cheek and the left side of the head, and my sleep was painless though disturbed.

On the Wednesday I had constant toothache and pain in the left eye, and on Thursday I spent an hour in the large bath. This same morning there came to hand, by way of Rome, a letter from M. de Tausin, written from Bordeaux on August 2nd, in which he informed me that, on the preceding day, I had been chosen to be Mayor of that city by public choice, and begged me that, out of my good will for the city, I would take up this burden.

On his way to Florence he wrote:

This morning I felt my head heavy and my sight troubled, these being symptoms of those

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headaches with which I have been affected for the last ten years. This valley was formerly a morass, and Livy relates how Hannibal was forced to ride an elephant when he traversed it, and lost one of his eyes on account of the severity of the season: it is assuredly a flat and lowlying country and greatly at the mercy of the floods of the Arno. I refused to eat at dinner, but I repented of this, for had I eaten I might have vomited, and I always find the speediest remedy thereby. Otherwise I am troubled by my head for a day or two, as was now the case. The road was crowded with country-folk taking provisions to Florence where we arrived after crossing one of the four stone bridges, over the Arno, having ridden twelve miles.

Montaigne visited the famous Campo Santo at Pisa and reports the popular notion that the earth in which they were interred made bodies swell and decompose within forty-eight hours. "And this belief is a plausible one because in this particular cemetery bones are very rarely seen, scarcely any indeed, neither is there any place where they are collected and reinterred as in other cities."

Of the health of the city (destined later

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FRATELLI ALINARI, FLORENCE, ITALY

The Campo Santo or burying ground, Pisa.

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to be a favorite residence for English consumptives) he says:

Only a short time ago this city bore an evil name for its unhealthy air, but this is vastly improved since Duke Cosimo has drained the marshes by which it is surrounded. Formerly the place was so unhealthy that when the government wanted to banish any one, and at the same time get rid of him, they always banished him to Pisa, where in a few months the job was done. There are no partridges here, though the Duke has taken great pains to foster them.

I received several visits at my lodging from Girolamo Borro, a physician and doctor of philosophy, and when I went to see him on July 14, he made me a present of his book on the flux and reflux of the sea, written in Italian. At the same time he showed me another book he had written in Latin on the diseases of the body.

Montaigne appears to have entertained considerable regard for Dr. Borro but probably chiefly in his capacity of professor of philosophy at the University of Pisa.[1]

[1] Pisa . . . hath an university, wherein the Duke maintains 48 professors with stipends according to their worthiness from 50 crowns yearly upward. At my being there Doctor Poppone, the

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Borro eventually came to the notice of the Inquisition and after prosecution at its hands was dismissed from the university and died six years later. In one of his essays Montaigne characterizes the doctor as "an honest man" which may be regarded as high praise from such a source.

On the 25th I paid a visit to Cornacchino, a famous Pisan physician and teacher. He lived according to a rule of his own, which differed vastly from the rules of his art. Immediately after dinner he would go to sleep and would drink a hundred times a day. He read to me some rhymes of his own, written in the Pisan dialect which were not unpleasing. According to him the baths near the city are of no great account, but he had a high opinion of those of Bagno Acqua, about sixteen miles distant, which he declared to be marvellously good for liver complaints, detailing to me some wonderful cures, and for the stone and colic as well. He recommended me, however, before taking these waters, to drink some of the Della Villa spring. He is of opinion that, after bloodletting, medicine has no curative agent to compare with baths, if only they be used with under-

chief professor for the common and civil law, had a 1,000 crowns, and Mercuriales, the chief professor of physic, had 1,700 crowns. FYNES MORYSON: *Itinerary*.

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standing. He also told me that at Bagno Acqua the lodgings are good, and that I might make myself very comfortable there.

Tommaso Cornacchini was a famous physician of Arezzo, and professor of medicine at the University of Pisa. One of his sons was also distinguished in medicine.

Regarding the waters of Pisa, Montaigne says:

I took a draught of it to test it, and found it lacking in taste and in smell also. I only detected a slight roughness on the tongue. It is scarcely warm at all and very pleasant to drink. I looked at the water as it flowed from the spout, and perceived therein the same minute particles, white atoms, which had offended me at Baden, and which I judged to be some dirt come in from without. Now, I believe these atoms to be connected with the mineral properties of the water. . . It is said to be good for the liver and for the eruptions caused by liver disorders. The same draught is prescribed here as at other baths, and exercise after drinking is commonly taken: or you may take a sweating bath, or use it in other forms. . . This morning I passed another stone somewhat larger and looking as if it must have been detached from one much larger. God knows whether it is so. Let it be as he wills.

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At Pisa we get an intimation that he had the ordinary sight-seer's weakness for souvenirs. Among other things, he bought a cup of Indian nut which he said was quite "as efficacious against the spleen and gravel as tamarisk." When he started back to France he shipped from Rome a case of things he had collected. Did it contain the two boxes of "all sorts of medicaments" which the people of Tivoli made from the "scum" of the sulphurous waters at Tivoli or had the medicaments been used up already? The case of curios was twenty days getting as far as Milan.

After Pisa he sought out the baths of Vignone, where he was troubled with orbital and frontal headache. Of Naviso he says:

The bath is likewise of great use to the sick people who come here in the spring of the year, and the man who hires it sells a quantity of the mud taken from the bath, which mud, when dissolved in hot oil, is good for the itch in human beings, and for scabby dogs and cattle, when diluted with water. The price of this mud when sold on the spot is two giulios a load, but they sell it also in dried balls for seven quattrini apiece. We saw here a lot of dogs belonging to

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FRATELLI ALINARI FLORENCE, ITALY

The Triumph of Death by Orcagna. Section of fresco decoration, Campo Santo, Pisa.

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Cardinal Farnese, which had been sent here for the bath.

At the baths near Viterbo he made his usual careful observations.

This water throws up a white scum, which hardens readily and becomes solid like ice, making a crust on the surface of the water. If a linen cloth be dipped therein, it will quickly become loaded with this scum and quite stiff. This substance is sold into other parts for use in cleansing the teeth, and when chewed it has no more taste than earth or sand; indeed, the composition thereof is reputed to be the same as that of marble, in which case it might well harden in the kidneys. It is said, however, that the water which is exported in bottles has no sediment and remains quite clear. I imagine it may be drunk in any quantity, and that the sharpness before named may give it a certain savour and make it easier to swallow. . . I gathered faint hope of making a cure when I read an inscription on the wall, written by a certain man who cursed his physician for having sent him to such a place, and affirmed that he had suffered much ill from his stay there. Moreover, the proprietor hinted to me that I had come too late in the season, and certainly did not urge me to take the waters.

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CHAPTER XIII

The Return to France

When Montaigne got word of his election as mayor of Bordeaux and received intimations from the king that he ought to accept he started home and traveled by forced marches, though not omitting to see all he could on the way. He was in Rome when the more urgent summons reached him. His daily rides frequently amounted to twenty and thirty miles. How vital to the invalid was the condition of the roads! The highways of Tuscany had recently been improved and leveled by the Grand Duke and we can understand Montaigne's fervor in praying that God might reward him for this "work of the greatest service to the public." On leaving Parma "we changed horses at every post and for 2 posts I made them go at full gallop so as to test the strength of my loins. I felt no ill effects or weariness therefrom." These few words tell more than volumes of description. We picture a weary traveler tortured by the hardships of the road and his trying bodily ailments but

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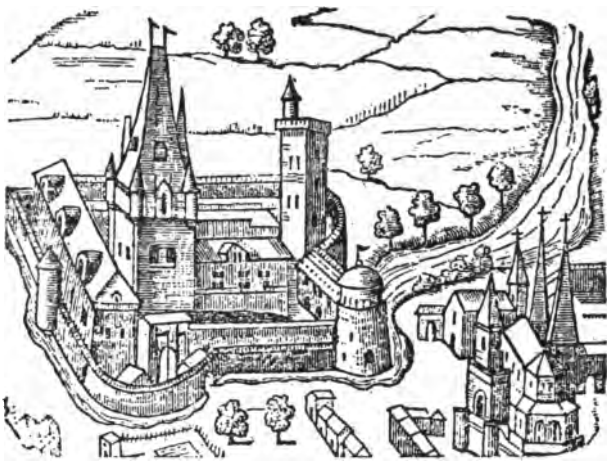
never losing his pluck. He was taken sick the night he reached Siena.

I suffered for two hours from colic, and I fancied I felt the movement of a stone. Early on Thursday morning I went to see one Guiglielmo Felix, a Jewish doctor, who talked to me



The Fort du Hâ, opposite Montaigne's house in Bordeaux

some time as to my general rule of living with regard to my kidneys and the gravel. I then left Siena, and was again troubled with colic for three or four hours. Then the pain came to a crisis, and I was assured that a stone must have passed. We travelled twenty-eight miles and supped at Ponteaelce, where I passed a stone bigger than a grain of millet, with a quantity

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of red gravel, but I suffered no pain. We left on the Friday morning, and halted sixteen miles along the road at Altopascio, where we stopped an hour to feed our cattle.

A consecutive perusal of his notes shows that Montaigne in spite of his diligent search for health was very much worse off when he left Italy than when he set out on his travels. That he consulted physicians in Rome, Pisa, Siena and elsewhere suggests that the repeated attacks of colic had somewhat mollified his prejudice against the profession and that the gravity of his condition was more and more borne in upon him. The failure to get any benefit from these gentlemen doubtless caused him to censure them with greater severity when he sat down once more to write essays at home.

He had previously gone from Venice to Padua by boat though "always somewhat in fear of water transit, being advised that it deranged his stomach, and now, being minded to ascertain whether the motion on this river, which indeed is most steady and uniform provided that the boat be drawn by horses, would cause him inconvenience, he made trial of it and found that he suffered no ill effects therefrom." In his

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essays he quotes from Plutarch, to whom he was most partial of all the ancient writers, to the effect that seasickness arose from fear but declares that this could not hold in his case for though very subject to seasickness he had no fear. Montaigne cites the case of animals who get seasick and mentions particularly hogs in whom there is no occasion to suspect the element of fear. He then goes on to say that he cannot long endure coach, litter or boat, or indeed any means of transportation except a horse. He found a litter less tolerable than a coach and experienced no more discomfort from travel on the water when there was considerable motion than in calm weather. He says, "It is the interrupted motion which disturbs me and the more when it is mild. The physicians have directed me to apply pressure and encircle the lower abdomen with a cloth to remedy this discomfort, something which I had never resorted to being in the habit of struggling against the weaknessess which are in me and of conquering them by myself." Now he has not the vigor to endure seasickness and gives a variety of other reasons for excusing to himself the omission from his schedule of so important a place as Genoa.

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I could not face the sea voyage on account of my weak stomach, and I shrank from the trouble of finding lodging in Genoa in its present crowded state, even more than from the discomforts of the journey by land. Moreover, I heard that the road from Genoa to Milan was haunted by thieves, and as I was exceedingly anxious to get home, I resolved to leave Genoa aside.

But in spite of everything the passion for sight-seeing survives.

I prolonged my journey by ten miles in order to see Pavia. On Wednesday, October 25th, I started early over a very good road, and during the way I voided a small soft stone and a good deal of gravel.

On the last day of October Montaigne started from Turin and prepared to cross the Alps, leaving the plain at Susa. He crossed the Alps partly on horseback and partly in a litter which four men carried on their shoulders, being frequently relieved by other sets of bearers.

Getting back to France Montaigne regrets some of the things left behind. "Here I began to appreciate the excellence of the Italian oil, of which I was never

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conscious after eating, but I found that the oil of these parts upset my stomach." At Lyons "on Saturday, Saint Martin's Day, I had a sharp pain in the stomach and kept my bed till midday. I felt disordered all day and took no dinner and a very light supper." As he approached Clermont, where he tarried a day to spare the young horses lately bought at Lyons, there was evidence everywhere of the havoc wrought by the recent plague.

I heard some remarkable accounts thereof. The dwelling of the Seigneur of the town, the manor-house of the Canillacs, was burnt so as to destroy the pestilence with fire.

On Monday the 20th I started in the morning, and on the heights of Pui de Dôme I passed a stone, somewhat broad and flat. I had felt it all the morning and even the day before with a slight pain in the kidneys. It was neither very hard nor very soft. . . As far as Limoges this road is badly furnished with inns, which, however, give you tolerably good wine, but they are used only by muleteers and couriers going to Lyons. My head was uneasy, the storms and cold winds and rain were very bad for it; and in sooth it got its fill of discomfort in this journey over a region where the winter is sharper than anywhere else in France.

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Italy was not the only country where the inns furnished bad wine. "At Chastein, I was forced to drink new unclarified wine, as no other was to be had, and the next day went on five leagues farther." The account of the journey now becomes more and more succinct. Montaigne is evidently preoccupied with thoughts of the civic duties he is about to assume and the narrative is little more than a statement of distances traversed each day. On the last day he rode 21 miles to reach the Château de Montaigne, "having quitted this same spot on June 22, 1580, to go to La Fère, my journey having lasted seventeen months and eight days."

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CHAPTER XIV

Clinical Record of the Journey

A review of Montaigne's physical condition during his journey across France to Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Italy, reaching as far south as Rome, is startling. He was increasingly the victim of headache. He had pains and weakness of the eyes. Indigestion, manifesting itself as general malaise, vague abdominal distress or sharp pain, nausea, dizziness and flatulence, was frequent. Now and again distress in a limb hampered the freedom of his movements. Later came repeated attacks of toothache and facial neuralgia, especially of the orbital and frontal regions. From time to time he is made sick by the treatment prescribed. Occasionally he is hoarse, catches cold, suffers from exposure to dampness, rain and cold, or has an annoying pruritus of the hand and other parts. Added to these endurable discomforts were crises of renal colic varying from mere aching of the loins to the most acute torture, lasting from two to twenty-four hours. Some of them were

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"endurable," some "did not interfere" were "not unusually severe," not "more violent than usual." By others he was "grievously tormented" and some occasioned "violent agony." Again and again he voids gravel in "incredible amount," "continuously" or "much." The actual calculi passed averaged more than one a month for the whole period of the tour.

But the record of the days and nights deals with others than himself—the people he meets and what they say and do; the things he sees and hears and what thoughts they inspire. Pain and suffering are minimized at the time and forgotten the moment they are past. They do not even dim the prospect ahead, despite the clear indication that the road must soon come to an end. The mental life was everything; the physical counted for nothing save as it benumbed his faculties for the moment. Truly here was an indomitable spirit, the temper of steel.

Montaigne is very precise in the analysis of his symptoms while taking the prolonged course of treatment at Bagni di Lucca, but elsewhere limits himself to saying that he had colic or headache, mild

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or severe, and how long it lasted. In most instances when a stone is passed he describes it and, naturally, size and hardness are the features of chief interest. At Stertzing the calculus was medium-sized, crumbly, yellow with white center. The two at Plombières were small. At Venice the two stones were large. The calculi were often preceded, accompanied or followed by gravel as in Florence, the Baths of Lucca and Rome. A fortnight after his arrival in the latter city he was taken so ill that he submitted to treatment at the hands of the French physician in attendance on the Cardinal of Rambouillet, aided by a dexterous apothecary whom he later on remembers with gratitude and pronounces "intelligent." They gave him several large pills of cassia put into his mouth on the end of a wet knife. These acted freely on the bowels and the following day Montaigne took two pills of Venetian turpentine done up in a wafer and put into his mouth on a silver spoon along with some drops of syrup. The only effect he observed from this was that it gave to the urine the odor of violets. After this, Montaigne took three times a drink which tasted just like almonds and he

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was assured it was nothing else; but he was convinced that it contained seeds of cucumber, melon, gourd and pumpkin. The indisposition continued unrelieved for about ten days when much gravel was followed by a large, long, solid, hard stone which took six hours in passing.

In all, while in Rome, Montaigne had five attacks of colic followed by one or more calculi. One of these was the size and shape of a pine kernel. In two of the attacks he passed "several."

At Bagni di Lucca hematuria was frequent and sometimes alarming. This symptom became almost constant after he reached home when the utmost powers of philosophy had to be summoned to replace hope. Hope had not been utterly renounced at the Baths of Lucca and there, noticing on one occasion that the renal output was less than one-fifth of the water ingested ("There's but poor reliance upon these physicians and their remedies"), he began careful estimates of what he drank and what he passed in twenty-four hours and soon was happy to notice that they tallied with each other. At the Baths he passed only two stones but much gravel and blood. He

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was convinced that the calculi were large when they left the kidney but became fragmented in the bladder. While here he makes the only mention of pain in the bladder. The period from August 15 to September 11, seems to have been one of continuous, severe suffering. Jaundice developed. The gravel passed was reddish, the urine full of blood. The stone passed on the 24th was preceded and followed by lively hemorrhage. The stone was the length of a pine nut, as wide as a bean, the largest he had yet passed. "I felt infinite delight when I had got rid of it, though the passage was very painful. . . . . I knew very well that something unusual was at hand."

Montaigne was regular in his habits. "My stomach and I never fail of our punctual assignation which is at leaping out of bed, if some indispensable business or sickness do not interfere with us" but at Pisa he did not have a single movement except by the aid of medicine, "a bad and treacherous assistant." At Bagni di Lucca gaseous distention so distressed him that he took a clyster of oil, camomile and anise-seed water. It was administered with "great

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skill and address" by his landlord. This was followed by marchpane and four spoonfuls of wine and next day he felt infinitely better. Some of the gravel passed at the Bagni was red; some red outside and gray inside. Of the stones passed at Lucca one was small and rough, another was clearly but a fragment of a larger one and the third was red outside and white within; hard and rough. The stone passed near Viterbo was the size of a grain of wheat—small, hard and red. "To facilitate the exit of this sort of stone you would do well to stop the course of your water for a minute or two, for the increased force with which it comes forth afterwards greatly aids the progress of the stone. I got this hint from Monsieur Langon of Arsac." The one voided on the Puy de Dôme was large, long and flat, neither hard nor soft.

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CHAPTER XV

Montaigne and Death

During the eleven years of life that remained to him after his return from Italy, Montaigne was occupied with his official duties in Bordeaux, with annotating and expanding Books I and II of his "Essays," and with the composition of Book III. He died in his beloved château, September 13, 1592, and was buried in the church of the Feuillants, Bordeaux.

For three days before he died Montaigne was unable to speak and had to make his wishes known by signs or written words. The nature of his disability is not clear. The actual cause of death is given as a quinsy accompanied by paralysis of the tongue. Did he have Angina Ludovici, was he merely afflicted with a complicating aphonia, was there a true edema of the glottis due to extension of the inflammation from neighboring tissues or to a manifestation of chronic disease of the kidneys in which much tissue change must have resulted

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from the many stones harbored by them? We do not know.

At all events he had friends and neighbors around him and a priest administered the sacraments so that Montaigne passed away in the conventional and accepted manner and perhaps this demise was more in harmony with the spirit of the real, inner man than the casual reader of his essays might suspect. Certainly he always professed a belief in God and a respect for the Church in its great essentials. In this he was neither illogical nor superstitious. Montaigne fully appreciated that the infinite is unknowable and that to comprehend God, or even to be capable of a perfectly spiritual conception of Him is impossible. Besides this, he realized, with truly scientific insight, that any ultimate explanation of physical phenomena is beyond us. His scepticism, though real, was not synonymous with utter negation. He knew little but believed in God and admitted the obligation to recognize and worship Him in some fashion. Instead of rejecting everything, because he could not know everything, Montaigne fell back on the forms of worship, the external observances taught by the Church, considering

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PANAJOU FRÈRES, BORDEAUX, FRANCE

Site of the original burial place of Montaigne in the apse of the church of the Feuillants, Bordeaux.

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them as good as any and as having the merit of wide acceptance and time-honored employment. In spite of the errors and crimes of the Church (he objected to roasting peoples' bodies for their supposed spiritual good) he selected its fashion of worship and the incidental ceremonial as the ones most pleasing to him. His religion was a pure monotheism and while he uses the word Christian, prefers the Lord's Prayer[1] to any other and holds it a model and amply sufficient, and a distinct argument against importuning the deity with an infinity of requests for the gratification of petty personal wishes, and while he quotes from the New Testament, the direct references to Christ are few. Nothing in his writings implies that he enjoyed any very comforting belief in the vicarious suffering of Christ for sinners. He seems to have had a modified Hebraic bias harking back to the tenets of his mother's family.

Montaigne had found comfort in the veil that screens the future from us. Man must

[1] Montaigne apparently had the habit of daily prayer. "I have a thousand times gone to bed in my own house . . . and after my paternoster, etc." (*Of Vanity.*)

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perform his allotted tasks unhampered by the thought that death may interfere and make all his beginnings vain.

Neither health, which I have hitherto ever enjoyed very strong and vigorous, and very seldom interrupted, does prolong, nor sickness contract my hopes. Methinks I scape every minute, and it eternally runs in my mind, that what may be done tomorrow may be done today. Hazards and dangers do, in truth, little or nothing hasten our end; and if we consider how many more remain and hang over our heads, besides the accident that immediately threatens us, we shall find that the sound and the sick, those that are abroad at sea, and those that sit by the fire, those who are engaged in battle, and those who sit idle at home, are the one as near it as the other. (Study of Philosophy is to Learn to Die.)

How sudden and unexpected the advent of death may be, he illustrates from history.

To omit fevers and pleurisies, who would ever have imagined that a Duke of Britanny should be pressed to death in a crowd, as that Duke was at the entry of Pope Clement into Lyons? . . . Æschylus, being threatened with the fall of a house, was to much purpose so circumspect to avoid that danger, when he was knocked on

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the head by a tortoise-shell falling out of an eagle's talons in the fields. Another was choked with a grape-stone: an Emperor killed with the scratch of a comb in combing his head. Æmillius Lepidus, with a stumble at his own threshold, and Afidius with a jostle against the door, as he entered the council chamber. . . Whilst Caius Julius the physician was anointing the eyes of a patient, death closed his own; and if I may bring in an example of my own blood; a brother of mine, Captain St. Martin, a young man, of three and twenty years old, who had already given sufficient testimony of his valour, playing a match at tennis, received a blow of a ball a little above his right ear, which, though it was without any manner or sign of wound, or depression of the skull, and though he took no great notice of it, nor so much as sat down to repose himself, he nevertheless died within five or six hours after, of an apoplexy occasioned by that blow. With so frequent and common examples passing every day before our eyes, how is it possible a man should disengage himself from the thought of death; or avoid fancying that it has us every moment by the collar? What matter is it, you will say, which way it comes to pass, provided a man does not terrifie himself with the expectation? For my part, I am of this mind, that if a man could by any mean s avoid it, though by creeping under a calveskin, I am

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one that should not be ashamed of the shift: all I aim at is to pass my time pleasantly, and without any great reproach, and the reactions that most contribute to it, I take hold of, as to the rest, as little glorious and exemplary as you would desire. (Study of Philosophy is to Learn to Die.)

But still the anticipation of dissolution was a painful one and he summoned all his philosophy to the rescue.

Let us disarm him of his novelty and strangeness, let us converse, and be familiar with him, and have nothing so frequent in our thoughts as death; let us upon occasions represent him in all his most dreadful shapes to our imagination; at the stumbling of a horse,[2] at the falling of a tile,[3] at the least prick with a pin, let us presently consider, and say to ourselves, well, and what if it had been death itself: and thereupon let us encourage and fortify ourselves. Let us evermore amidst our jollity and feasting, set the remembrance of our frail condition before our eyes,

[2] William the Conqueror died of rupture following a fall when his horse stepped on a firebrand at the capture of Mantes in Normandy.

[3] Simon de Montfort at the siege of Toulouse, 1217. Perhaps Montaigne refers here to the death of Titus Annius Milo (ally of Pompey) killed at the siege of Cosa in Calabria or Pyrrhus killed at the siege of Argos.

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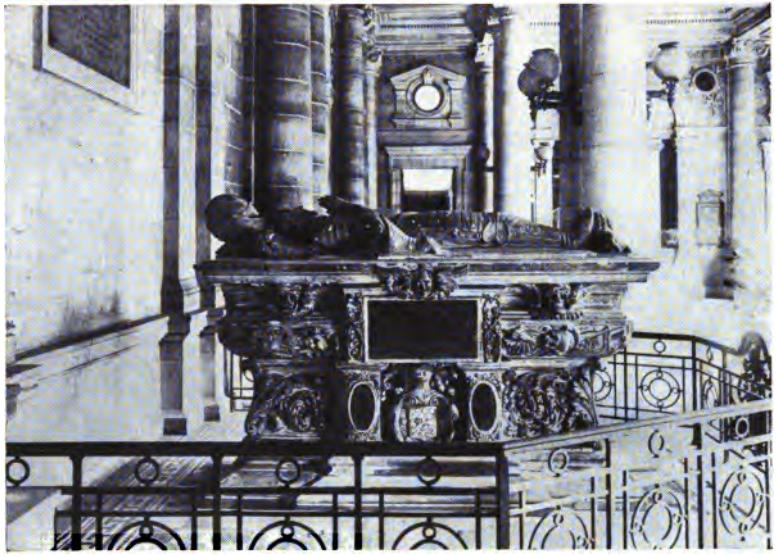

PARAJOU FRÈRES, BORDEAUX, FRANCE

Tomb of Montaigne, transferred in 1871 from the Church of the Feuillants to its present site in the basement of the University, Bordeaux.

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never suffering ourselves to be so far transported with our delight, but that we have some intervals of reflecting upon, and considering how many several ways this jollity of ours tends to death, and with how many dangers it threatens it. . . But moreover, nature herself does assist and encourage us. If the death be sudden and violent, we have not leisure to fear; if otherwise, I find, that as I engage further in my disease, I naturally enter into a certain loathing, and disdain of life. I find I have much more ado to digest this resolution of dying when I am well in health than when sick languishing of a fever. . . But nature, leading us by the hand, an easy, and as it were, an insensible pace, step by step conducts us to that miserable condition, and by that means makes it familiar to us, so that we perceive not, nor are sensible of the stroke then, when our youth dies in us, though it be really a harder death, than the final dissolution of a languishing body, which is only the death of old age; forasmuch as the fall is not so great from an uneasy being to none at all, as it is from a spritely and florid being to one that is unwieldy and painful. The body, when bowed beyond its natural spring of strength, has less force either to rise with, or support a burden. . . Death is the beginning of another life. So did we weep, and so much it cost us to enter into this, and so did we put off our former veil in entering into it.

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Nothing can be grievous that is but once, and is it reasonable so long to fear a thing that will so soon be dispatched. Long life and short, are by death made all one; for there is no long, nor short, to things that are no more. . . Life in itself is neither good nor evil, it is the scene of good or evil, as you make it; and, if you have lived a day, you have seen all; one day is equal, and like to all other days; there is no other light, no other shade, this very sun, this moon, these very stars, this very order and revolution of things, is the same your ancestors enjoyed, and that also entertain your posterity.[4] . . . And come the worst that can come, the distribution and variety of all the acts of my comedy, is performed in a year. If you have observed the revolution of the four seasons, they comprehend the infancy, youth, virility, and old age of the world. The year has played his part, and knows no other way, has no new farce, but must begin and repeat the same again; it will always be the same thing. (Study of Philosophy is to Learn to Die.)

A man may by custom fortify himself against pains, shame, necessity, and such like accidents;

[4] The world will turn when we are earth
As though we had not come nor gone;
There was no lack before our birth,
When we are gone there will be none.
OMAR KHAYYAM: *Rubaiyat.*

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but, as to death, we can experiment it but once, and are all apprentices when we come to it. (Use Makes Perfectness.)

It is not without reason that we are taught to consider sleep, as a resemblance of death.[5] With how great facility do we pass from waking to sleeping, and with how little concern do we lose the knowledge of light, and of ourselves! Peradventure the faculty of sleeping would seem useless and contrary to nature, being it deprives us of all action and sense, were it not that by it nature instructs us, that she has equally made us to die, as to live, and from life presents us the eternal estate, she reserves for us after it, to accustom us to it, and to take from us the fear of it. But such as have by some violent accident fallen into a swoon, and in it have lost all sense; these, methinks, have been very near seeing the true and natural face of death. Many things seem greater by imagination, than they are in effect. I have passed a good part of my age in a perfect and entire health; I say, not only entire, but moreover spritely and wanton. This estate, so full of verdure, jollity and vigor, made the consideration of sickness so formidable to me, that when I came to experiment it, I found the attacques faint, and easy in comparison of what I had apprehended. Of this I have

[5] How wonderful is Death, Death and his brother Sleep. SHELLEY.

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daily experience; if I am under the shelter of a warm room, in a stormy and tempestuous night, I wonder how people can live abroad, and am afflicted for those who are out in the field: if I am there myself, I do not wish to be anywhere else. This one thing of being always shut up in a chamber, I fancied insupportable: but I was presently inured to be so imprisoned a week, nay a month together. And have found that in the time of my health, I did much more lament the sick, than I think myself to be lamented when I am so, and that the force of my imagination enhances near one-half of the essence and reality of the thing. I hope that when I come to die I shall find the same, and that I shall not find it worth the pains I take, so much preparation and so much assistance as I call in, to undergo the stroke.

Death has some forms that are more easy than others, and receive divers qualities, according to every one's fancy. Amongst the natural ones, those that proceed from weakness and stupidity I think the most favorable: amongst those that are violent, I can worse endure to think of a precipice than the fall of a house, that will crush thee flat in a moment, and a wound with a sword, than a harquebus shot: and should rather have chosen to poison myself with Socrates, than stab myself with Cato. (Of Vanity.)

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Our very insignificance should palliate death.

Few men die in the opinion that it is their last hour,[6] and there is nothing wherein the flattery of hope does more delude us. It never ceases to whisper in our ears, others have been much sicker without dying; my condition is not so desperate as 'tis thought, and at the worst, God has done other miracles. Which happens, by reason that we set too much value upon ourselves. It seems as if the universality of things were in some measure to suffer by our dissolution, and that it did commiserate our condition. For as much as our depraved sight represents things to itself after the same manner, and that we are of opinion they stand in as much need of us as we do of them; like people at sea, to whom mountains, fields, cities, heaven and earth are tossed at the same rate they are. (Of Judging of the Death of Another.)

[6] William Osler in "Science and Immortality" mentions "careful records of about 500 death-beds, studied particularly with reference to the modes of death and the sensations of the dying . . . 11 showed mental apprehension, 2 positive terror . . . 1 bitter remorse. The great majority gave no sign one way or the other; like their birth, their death was a sleep and a forgetting."

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To his high sense of what was appropriate and fitting the banalities of the deathbed were peculiarly offensive.

It is the dreadful looks, the grim apparatus with which we surround Death, that affright us. Quite a new aspect of life—the cries of mothers, of wives, of children, visits from dazed, heart-broken people; the presence of numbers of pale footmen, their eyes swollen with crying; a dark room, lighted tapers, our couch besieged by physicians and preachers—in short, every kind of horror and alarm around us. (To Study Philosophy is to Learn to Die.)

I have seen many miserable dying, surrounded with all their train: 'tis a crowd that chokes them. 'Tis against duty, and a testimony of little kindness, and little care, to permit you to die in repose, one torments your eyes, another afflicts your ears, another tires your faltering tongue; you have neither sense nor member that is not violated by them; your heart is wounded with compassion to hear the mourning of those that are your real friends, and perhaps with spite, to hear the counterfeit condolings of those who only pretend and make a show of being so. Whoever has been delicate that way, when well, is much more so in his weakness. (Of Vanity.)

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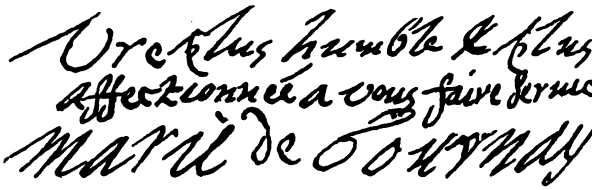
He has some pertinent remarks about old age as a natural death.

What an idle conceit it is, to expect to die of a decay of strength, which is the last of effects of the extremest age, and to propose to ourselves no shorter lease of life than that, considering it is a kind of death of all others the most rare, and very hardly seen. We call that only a natural death, as if it were contrary to nature,



Signature of Marie de Gournay in a letter to J. Lipsius.

to see a man break his neck with a fall, be drowned in a shipwreck at sea; or snatched away with a pleurisy, or the plague, and, as if our ordinary condition of life did not expose us to these inconveniences. Let us no more flatter ourselves with these fine sounding words: we ought rather, at a venture, to call that natural, which is common and universal. To die of old age, is a death rare, extraordinary and singular, and therefore so much less natural, than the others: 'tis the last and extremest sort of dying; and the more remote, the less to be hoped for. (Of Age.)

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It must have been the remembrance of La Boétie's last hours and the hope that his presence had comforted the dying man that prompted him to say:

In such a necessity a tender hand is required, and accommodated to his sentiments, to scratch him just in the place where he itches, or not to meddle with him at all. If we stand in need of a midwife [*sage femme*] to bring us into the world, we have much more need of a wiser man to help us out of it. Such a one, and a friend to boot, a man ought to purchase at any rate for such an occasion. I am not yet arrived to such a pitch of bravery as to disdain all assistance in that

This autograph of Montaigne's wife is a facsimile of that affixed to her marriage contract.

fatal hour,[7] nor pretend to be able so to fortify myself in my own strength, that nothing can assist or defend me; I have not brought myself

[7] There is no confessor like unto Death!
Thou canst not see him, but he is near;
Thou needst not whisper above thy breath,
And he will hear;
He will answer the questions,
The vague surmises and suggestions,
That fill thy soul with doubt and fear!
LONGFELLOW: *The Golden Legend.*

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to that; I endeavor to hide myself, and to escape from this passage, not by fear but by art. I do not intend in this act of dying to muster up and make a show of my constance. For whom should I do it? All the right and title I have to reputation will then cease. I content myself with a death involved within itself, quiet, solitary, and all my own, suitable to my retired and private life. (Of Vanity.)

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